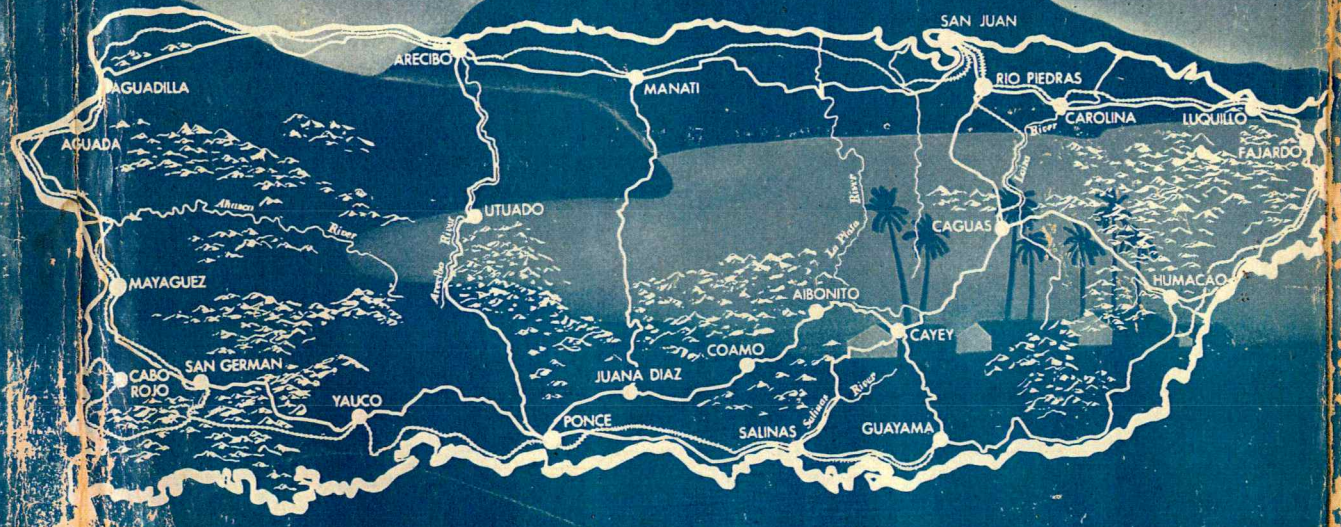
PUERTO RICO · CARIBBEAN CROSSROADS

PUERTO RICO

CARIBBEAN CROSSROADS



PHOTOGRAPHY BY

CHARLES E. ROTKIN

TEXT BY

LEWIS C. RICHARDSON

CHARLES E. ROTKIN

Charles E. Rotkin, who made the photographs in this book, was born in New York City thirty years ago. His interest in photography began in 1933 as an amateur, but after becoming acquainted and working with Robert Disraeli, the well-known documentary photographer, he decided to pursue documentary photography seriously. His interest in this field was further advanced by his friendship with Edwin Rosskam, who acquainted him with the documentary picture file of the Farm Security Administration, and gave him guidance and help. He later studied advanced techniques with Berenice Abbott and assisted her for a term at the New School for Social Research.

The Army called him in 1943. Although he was classified as a still photographer, he was promptly assigned to Puerto Rico as an aerial photographer. He did aerial photography for a short time and was then transferred to Special Services where he conceived and built one of the largest G.I. camera clubs in the Army, numbering at its peak over 500 soldier-members.

Shortly after his arrival on the Island, he was so impressed by the wealth of documentary photographic material involved in Puerto Rican life that he interested the University of Puerto Rico in sponsoring the production of this book.

After a year in Puerto Rico, he was transferred to the Public Relations Department of the Air Force Redistribution Station at Atlantic City. Three months of that made him very happy to be returned to Puerto Rico to resume his direction of the Camera Club at Borinquen Field where he remained until his discharge in April of 1946.

He is now working as Chief of the Photographic Division of the Office of Information for Puerto Rico in San Juan.

price $3.50

PUERTO RICO

CARIBBEAN CROSSROADS

PUERTO RICO

CARIBBEAN CROSSROADS

+

ITS PLACE IN THE WESTERN WORLD AND MILEAGE TO LEADING CITIES

PUERTO RICO

CARIBBEAN CROSSROADS

PUERTO RICO

CARIBBEAN CROSSROADS

PRODUCED UNDER THE SPONSORSHIP OF
THE BOARD OF PUBLICATIONS

UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO

PHOTOGRAPHY BY

CHARLES E. ROTKIN

TEXT BY

LEWIS C. RICHARDSON

U. S. CAMERA PUBLISHING CORP., NEW YORK

COPYRIGHT 1947 BY U.S. CAMERA PUBLISHING CORP., NEW YORK

PRODUCED UNDER THE SPONSORSHIP OF THE
BOARD OF PUBLICATIONS

UNIVERSITY OF PUERTO RICO

DR. ANTONIA SAEZ, *President of the Board*; ENRIQUE LAGUERRE, *Secretary of the Board*

Members of the Board
DEAN SEBASTIÁN GONZÁLEZ GARCÍA, J. M. TORO-NAZARIO, SALVADOR TIÓ

Research by J. M. TORO-NAZARIO
Book design by ADELE D. ROTKIN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the following individuals and organizations for their help and cooperation in the preparation of this book:

Jorge Acosta, Mrs. Hilda Bellaflores, and César Calderón, of the Agricultural Extension Service of the University of Puerto Rico; Dr. Jaime Benítez, Chancellor of the University of Puerto Rico; Irene Delano; Max A. Egloff, Director of Information for the Government of Puerto Rico; Elmer Ellsworth, Coordinator of Insular Affairs for the Government of Puerto Rico; Major George M. Leslie, AAF; Brigadier-General Thomas R. Phillips, USA; Colonel Minthorne Reed, AAF; Albert Reissner; Edwin Rosskam; Roy Stryker; the Agricultural Extension Service of the University of Puerto Rico; the *Central* Coloso; the Office of Information for Puerto Rico; the Puerto Rico Distilling Company; the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company.

CHARLES E. ROTKIN
LEWIS C. RICHARDSON

CONTENTS

PART I: WE INTRODUCE OURSELVES 7

We are a colony 13

PART II: MOST OF US LIVE ON THE LAND 16

These are our homes 20
Our diet is meager 24
It's hard to make ends meet 27
This is what we grow 29
Sugar is king 31
It's a long way to town 38
Rural schooling is scanty 40
We sing, we dance, we pray 44

PART III: THE REST OF US LIVE IN THE TOWNS AND CITIES 50

Our occupations are varied 56
Many of us are unemployed 72
Here we live 76
We mill your sugar 83
We distill your rum 89
Education meets difficulties 90
Our social life is sociable 92

PART IV: TOGETHER WE ARE SOLVING OUR PROBLEMS 106

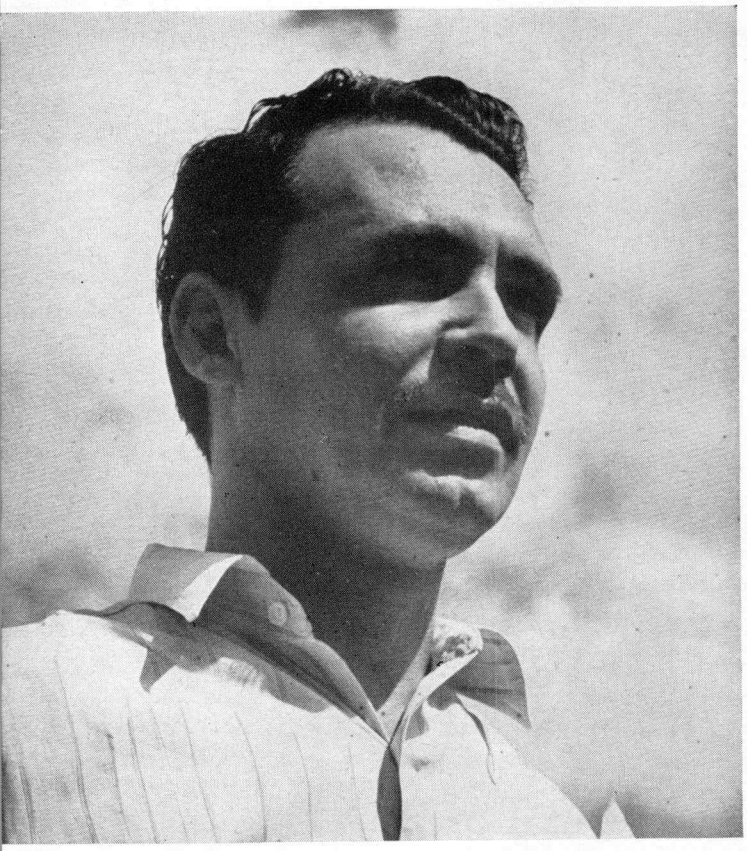
Land goes to the people 107
New houses are built 112
We improve our health 114
Our people get electricity 116
Our University sets the pace 119
We industrialize 124
We learn new skills 132
Labor protects its rights 134
We take political action 136

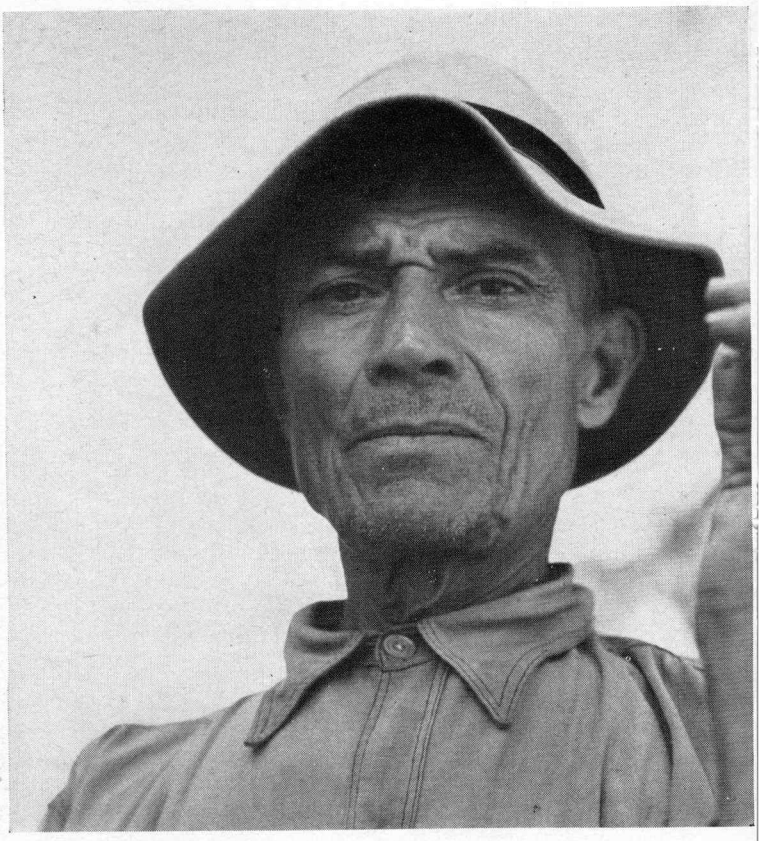
ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHS 141

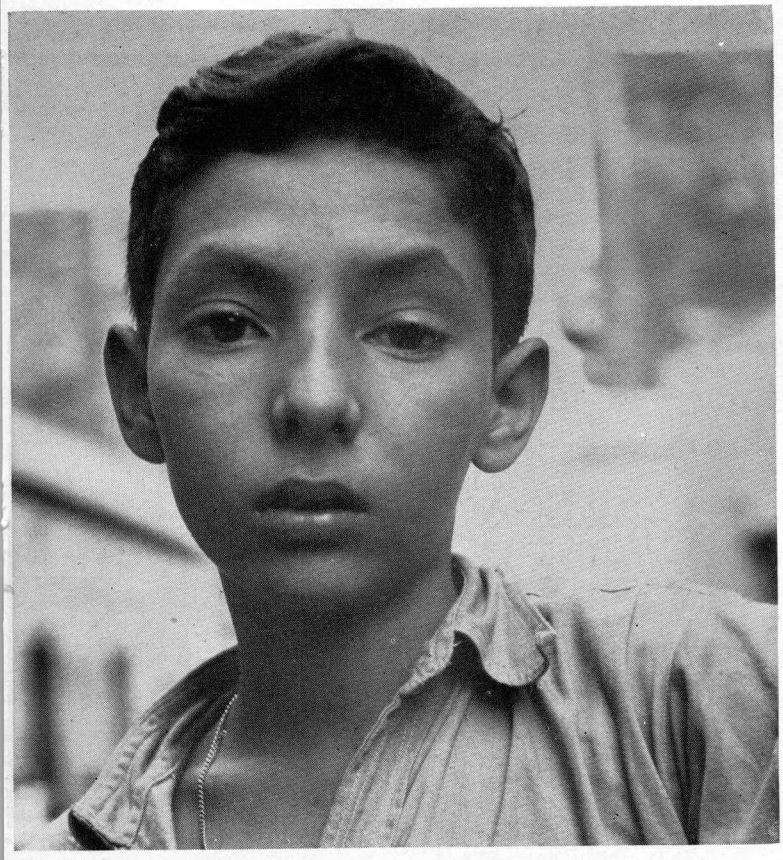
PART I:
WE INTRODUCE OURSELVES

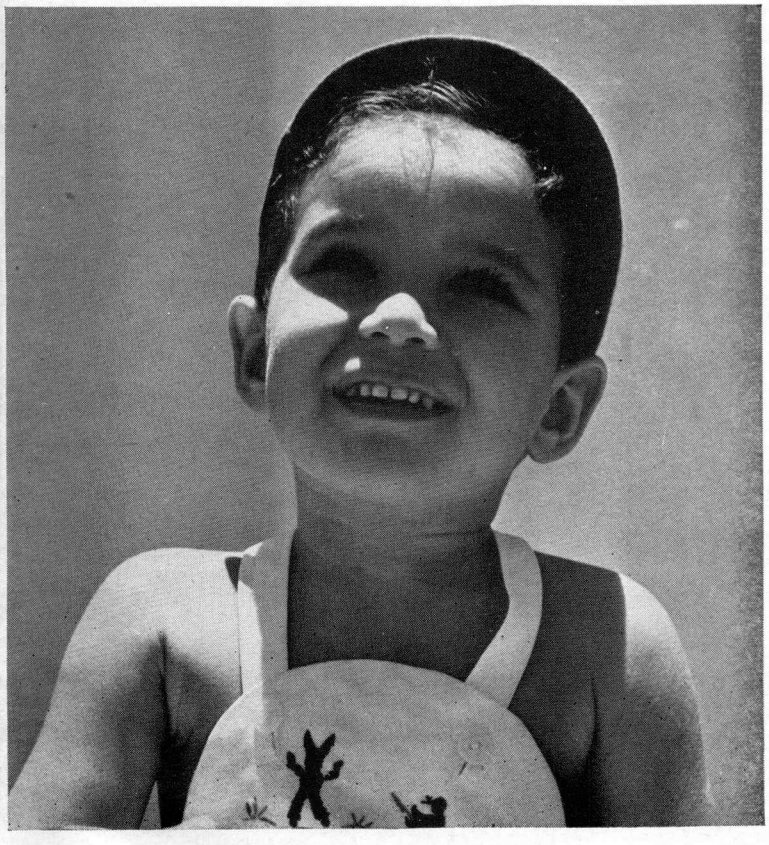
Good neighbors, especially when they are next door neighbors, should know each other. We have met some of you people and we have also learned something about you through books, magazines, movies, the radio, and even your mail order catalogs. Since similar information about us is not accessible to many of you, we are introducing ourselves through this book.

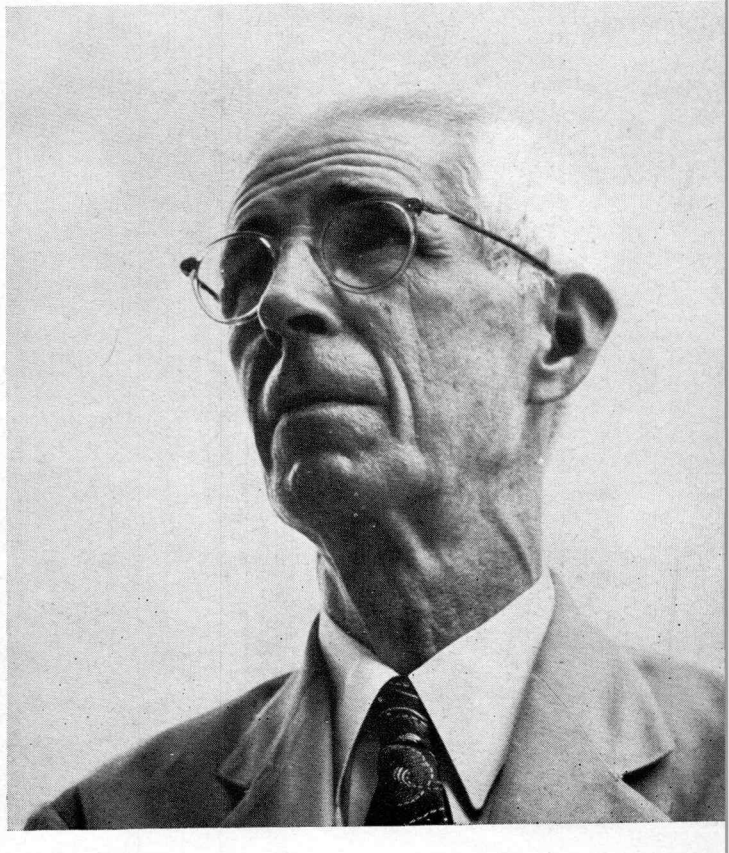
We are not giving you a tourist blurb nor propaganda of any other kind — except as all truth is propaganda. We feel no urge to present our home as a tropical paradise; neither do we have any interest in an equally onesided exposé of suffering and social injustice. Rather, as far as has been within our power, we have given you a fair sampling, an unbiased cross-section, of life as it is lived in Puerto Rico, with its beauty and its ugliness, its joys and its sufferings, its attainments and its failures. If the resulting picture is not pretty, it is because prettiness is not a characteristic of human society— in Puerto Rico or elsewhere. But we hope that you will perceive basic human values much more important than mere surface prettiness, in the Puerto Rico and the Puerto Ricans that you will meet in these pages.





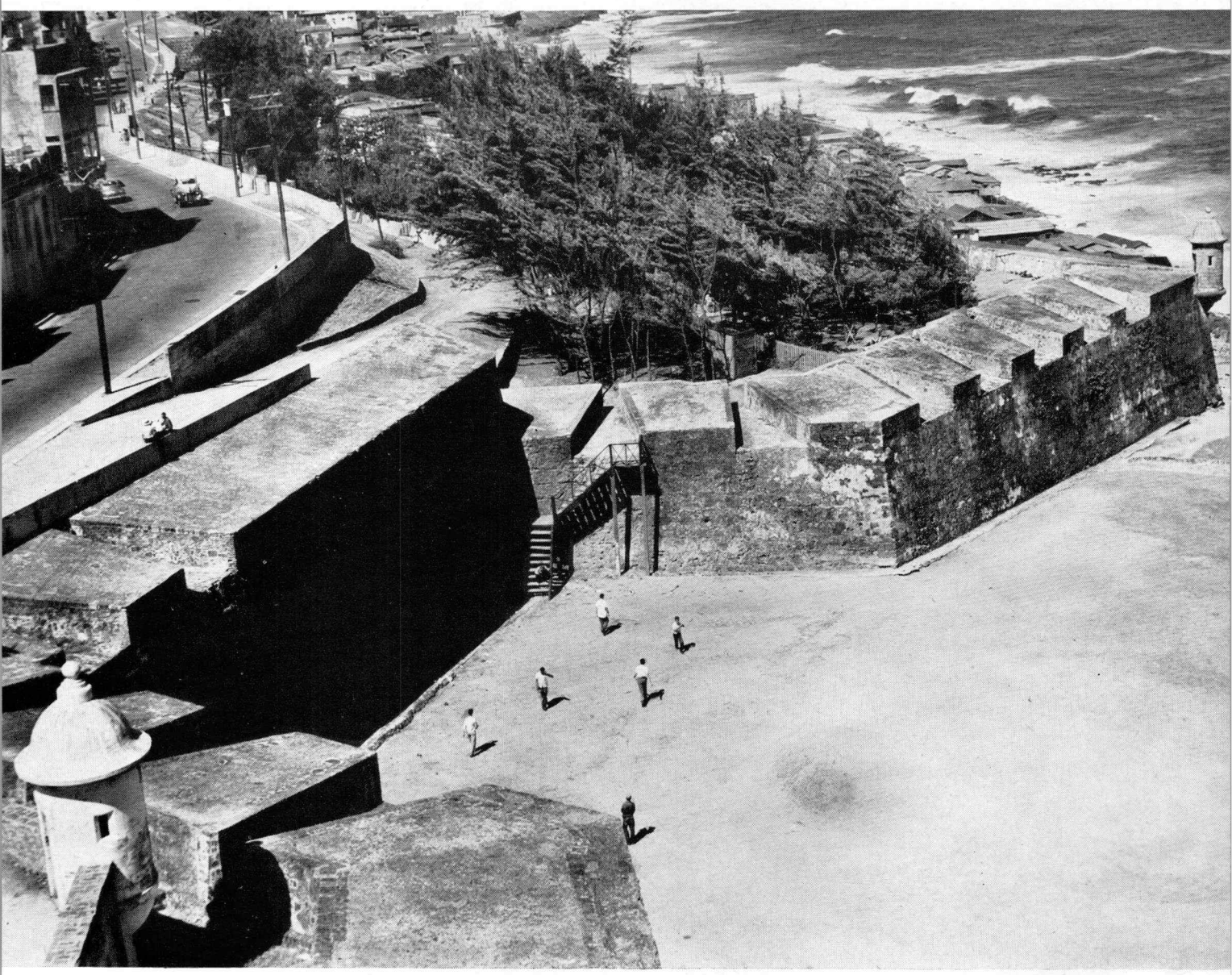






The smallest of the Greater Antilles, Puerto Rico, is about a hundred miles long and some thirty-five miles across. It lies sixteen hundred miles south of New York, guarding the Caribbean entrance to the Panama Canal. Once a colony of Spain, and now a colony of the United States, Puerto Rico is, nevertheless, a proud country—proud of its long history and traditions, and proud of the future it is forging for itself. Columbus landed on the island in 1493, and its first governor, Juan Ponce de Léon, set sail from its shores to discover Florida almost a hundred years before the English stopped off here on the way to their first permanent American settlement in Jamestown.

Not only was Puerto Rico settled by Europeans earlier than any other area now under United States sovereignty, but it is also the place where that sovereignty received its first international recognition. At the height of the Revolutionary War, the American ships *Endawock* and *Henry,* sorely pressed by their British pursuer, the *Glasgow,* took refuge in the harbor of Mayagüez. The British Captain demanded that the local authorities turn over the Yankee ships and crews to him. The citizens of Mayagüez, however, took matters into their own hands by putting the crews into hiding. And, after due deliberation, the local authorities replied in the most courteous terms, of course, that they were bound

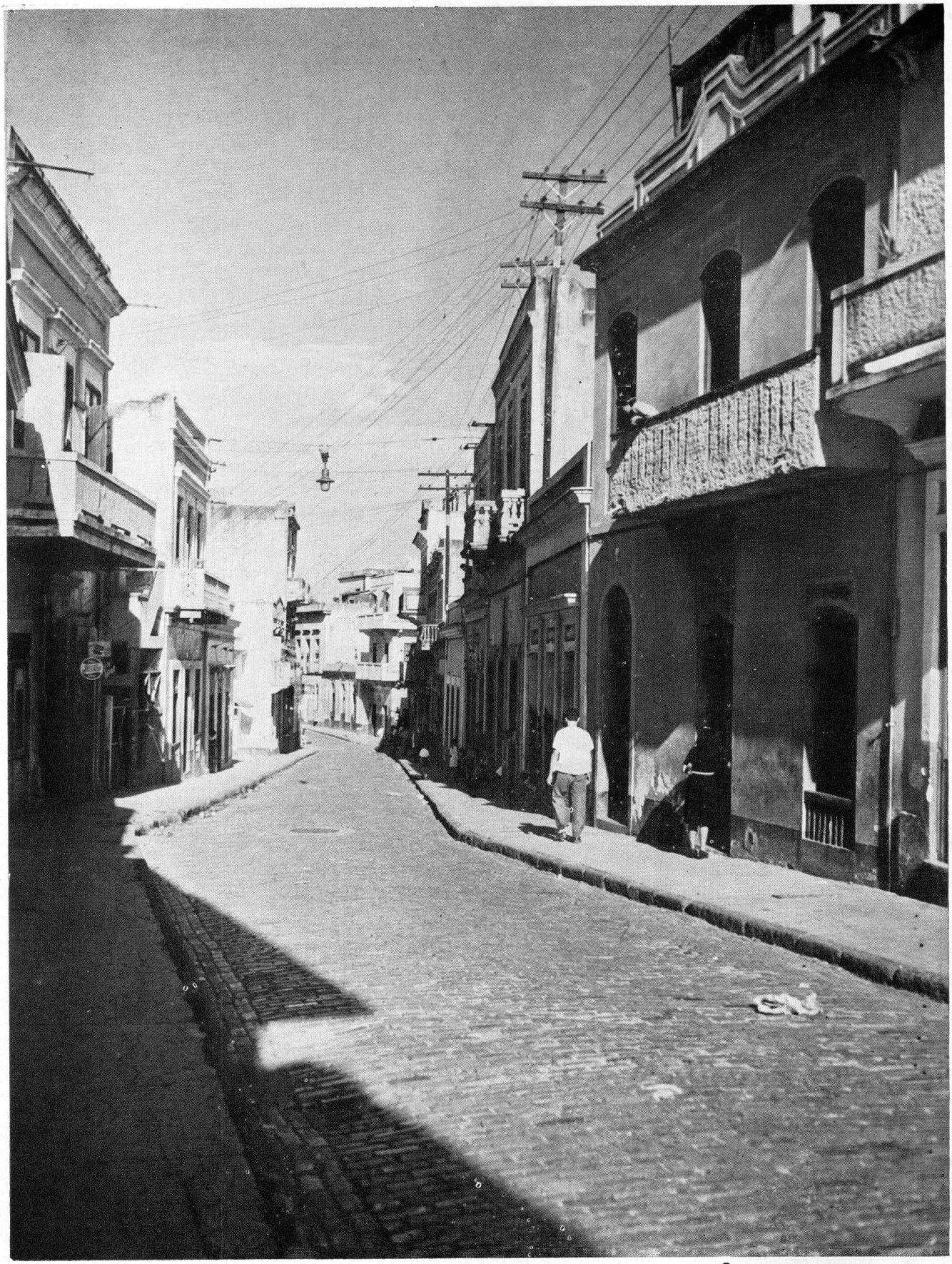


to respect the sovereignty of a friendly nation. When the determined Britishers were making ready to seize their prizes, the good people of Mayagüez thoughtfully hoisted the Royal Spanish flag over the *Endawock* and the *Henry*. The Captain of the *Glasgow*, to avoid an international incident, made off to sea, cursing Puerto Rican punctiliousness and hospitality. An appeal to the Spanish Governor-General brought an equally courteous and punctilious decision upholding the stand taken by the people and authorities of Mayagüez.

In the course of its history, Puerto Rico has been a minor melting pot. Side by side with the typical Spanish family names of Pérez and Hernández, are the Portuguese Pereiras, the Irish O'Neills, the German Rieckehoffs, the Danish Monefeldts, the English Lees, the Corsican Fraticellis, the Russian Megwinoffs, the French Balzacs, the Scotch Calders, the Dutch Huykes, and the Libanese Galibs.

Most of the some 30,000 Taino aborigines were killed off during the early days of the colony by Carib raiders, the Spanish, epidemics, and hurricanes, and their place as laborers was taken by Negro slaves. Neither group ever had the numerical influence on the makeup of the country that the Indians had, say in Mexico, or the Negroes in Cuba. Slavery, however, attained no small economic importance in the plantation system that gradually arose to replace the frustrated hopes of great mineral wealth.

Puerto Rico, therefore, is proud that the year after the close of the American Civil War, a Puerto Rican journalist and his American wife founded the Spanish Abolition Society in Madrid; that Puerto Rico consistently demanded Negro emancipation; that it finally persuaded the Spanish Republic of 1873 to liberate all the slaves on the island; and that, from that day till this, the so-called "racial problem" has been less acute in Puerto Rico than in most other countries.



WE ARE A COLONY

Despite the numerous smaller tributaries that have swelled the stream of our national life, we are still predominantly Spanish in blood, traditions, and manner of living. Spanish is also the language of our homes, our churches, and our Legislature, though we value English as a second language and teach it in all our schools. Since 1898, when the United States took over our island, we have come into close contact with American ways of life. In them we have seen much to admire, much that we have been able to adapt to our own needs and assimilate into our own culture. For all this we are grateful. What, as a self-respecting people, we have always resented, is any attempt to *impose* customs and norms upon us, any suggestion that we should slavishly copy rather than wisely choose and truly assimilate.

Politically we still belong to the United States, and some of us would like to continue to do so—as the forty-ninth State of the Union. Others of us would be satisfied with nothing short of complete independence. All of us, however, are agreed that our present colonial status is morally degrading, economically untenable, and politically in direct contradiction to the great spirit of American democracy that we so sincerely admire. And all of our political parties heartily applauded President Truman's recent message to Congress urging that Puerto Rico be allowed to decide, by means of a plebiscite, its future as a nation.

Since all our leaders, and the masses of people behind them, anathematize the colonial system under which we live, it may be well to explain in passing, what we mean by that term. It is true that official utterances have attempted to avoid the word *colony* in referring to Puerto Rico, and that some of the euphemisms employed in its place have been, to say the least, amusing. The classical example of this beating about the bush is the famous Supreme Court decision which defines Puerto Rico as "belonging to, but not forming part of the United States of America." We, however, insist that we are a colony and that we don't like it. And here are a few of the things that we mean when we make these assertions.

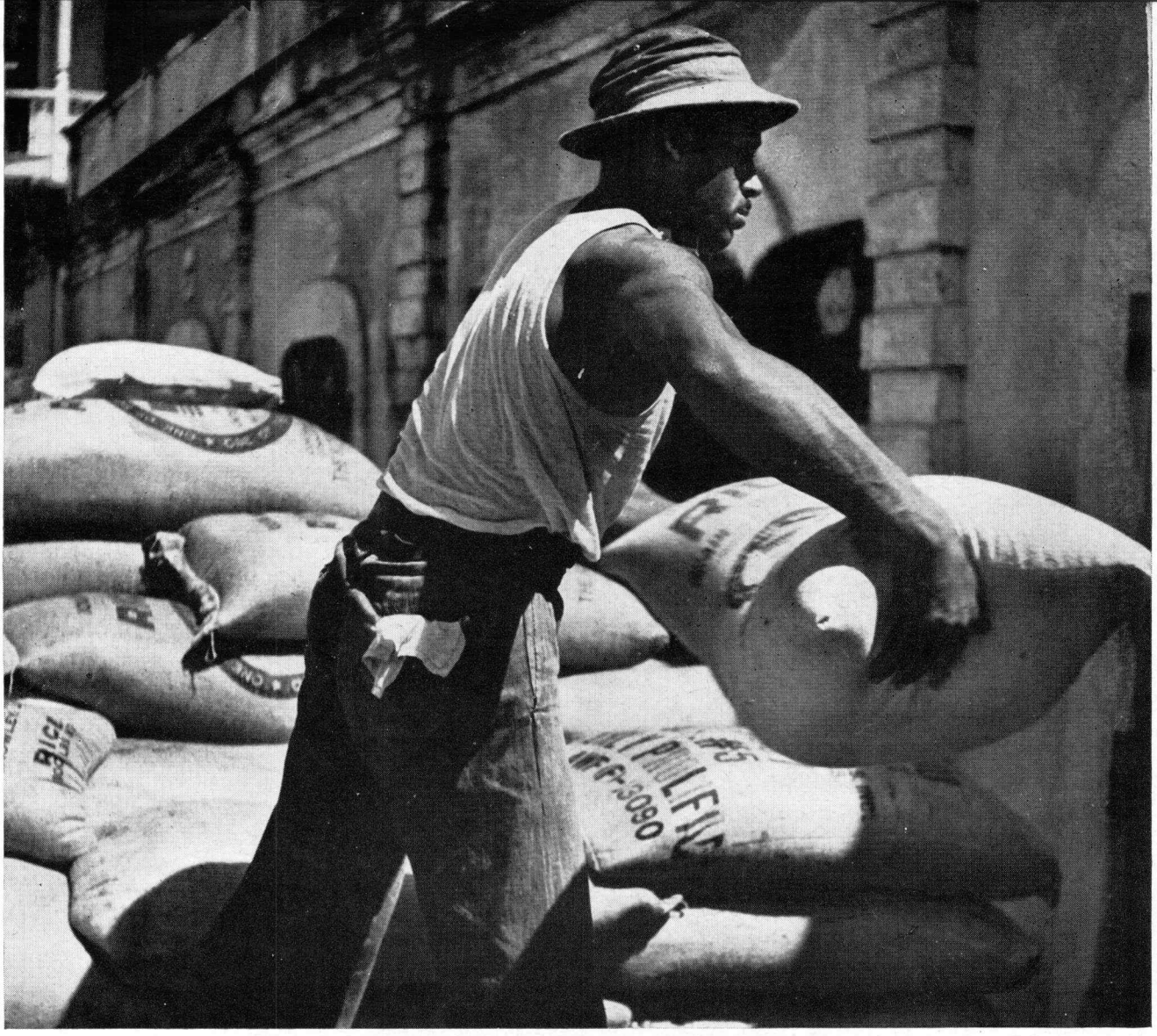
First of all, under the colonial status we have recently been receiving considerable sums of Federal moneys. Although Puerto Rico must be mentioned by name in order to benefit from any appropriations bill that covers the forty-eight states, we have lately been treated generously in this respect. This generosity is a paternalistic one, however: Congress, like the Lord, can give and it can take away without our having anything to say about the matter. Furthermore, Federal grants are, of course, made for specific purposes; and these purposes often turn out to be palliatives rather than correctives in an unstable economic structure such as ours.

Colonialism also means to us that, although we are American citizens, we have no participation in the national government so long as we continue to live in Puerto Rico. Our only approach to representation comes through our Resident Commissioner, who has a voice in the lower house of Congress but no vote.

Even the Constitution of the United States does not protect us here on the Island, except as some of its provisions may be included in specially enacted laws. Our own substitute for a constitution is the so-called Organic Act, in the formulation of which we had no part.

Our colonial Governor is appointed by the President, with the consent of the United States Senate; and this Governor has the power of veto over the Puerto Rican Legislature even when the latter has maintained itself within the limits set by the Organic Act. If the Governor's decision is overruled by a two-thirds majority, the veto power is merely transferred to the President, whose decision is final.

The Auditor of Puerto Rico, the Attorney General, the members of the Supreme Court, the Federal Judge, and the Commissioner of Education are likewise presidential appointees. The making of our laws, their interpretation, and their administration are therefore strictly under the thumb of a government that we have had no part in electing and which in no way democratically represents us. We cannot even educate our own children as we see fit, for the Commissioner of Education is invested with almost czaristic powers, which permit him to formulate the courses of study, supervise the instruction, and appoint the teachers of the Island in our highly centralized system of education.

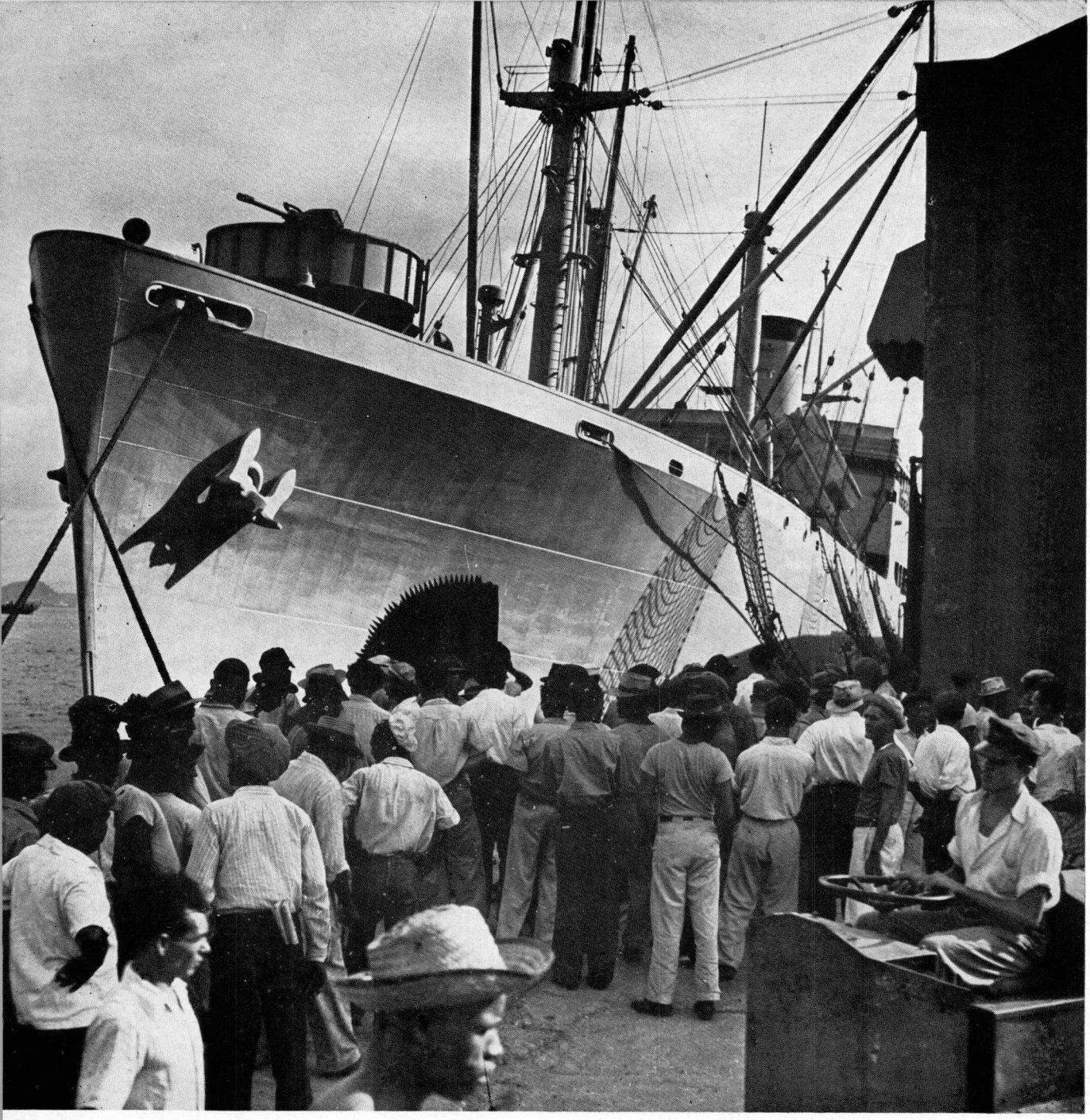


More subtle, but no less serious, than these overt influences of the colony, are its psychological effects upon us. When an adult is kept attached to his mother's—or, worse yet, his stepmother's—apronstrings, no matter how well-meaning that mother or stepmother may be, the results are likely to be prolonged adolescence, or a spirit of negative rebelliousness, or both. In the case of our country, these concomitants of colonialism have been aggravated by the feeling that we are adrift, that no one knows whither we are bound. The government of the United States has never made any official statement of intentions regarding our final political status, nor have we ever been consulted as to our choice in the matter. The only possible way out of this psychological dead-end lies in the hope that Congress will heed President Truman's message and recognize our right to decide our own future.

Whatever that future may be, it must be carefully planned for. These plans must take into account the manifold problems that confront our country, some of them the direct or indirect results of the colonial system itself.

One of these problems is overpopulation. Puerto Rico is one of the most densely inhabited agricultural regions in the entire world. Smaller than any State of the Union except Rhode Island and Delaware, our land is more thickly settled than any state except industrial Rhode Island, and we have a greater total population than any of twenty-seven out of the forty-eight states.

On top of this, and partly because of it, we have a one-crop economy: in Puerto Rico, sugar is king. This condition is complicated by a considerable amount of absentee ownership. Furthermore, the logical escape into industrialization is made difficult by an almost complete lack of

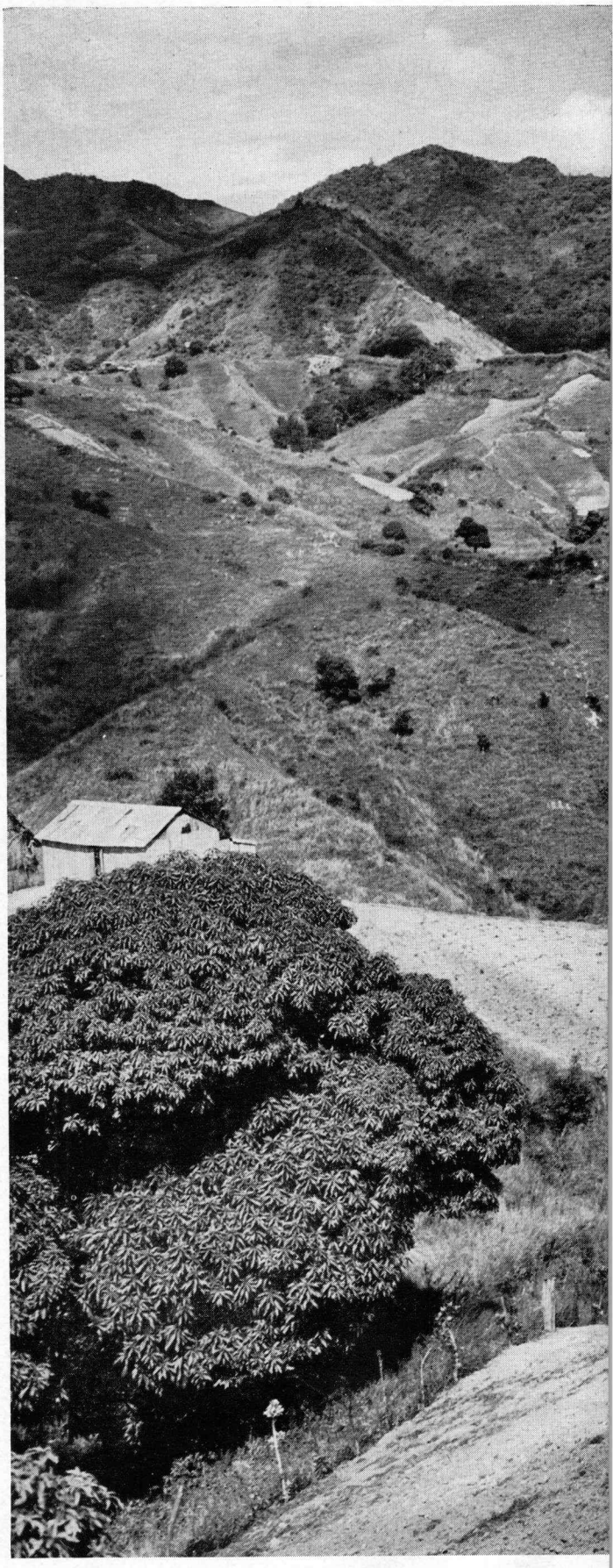


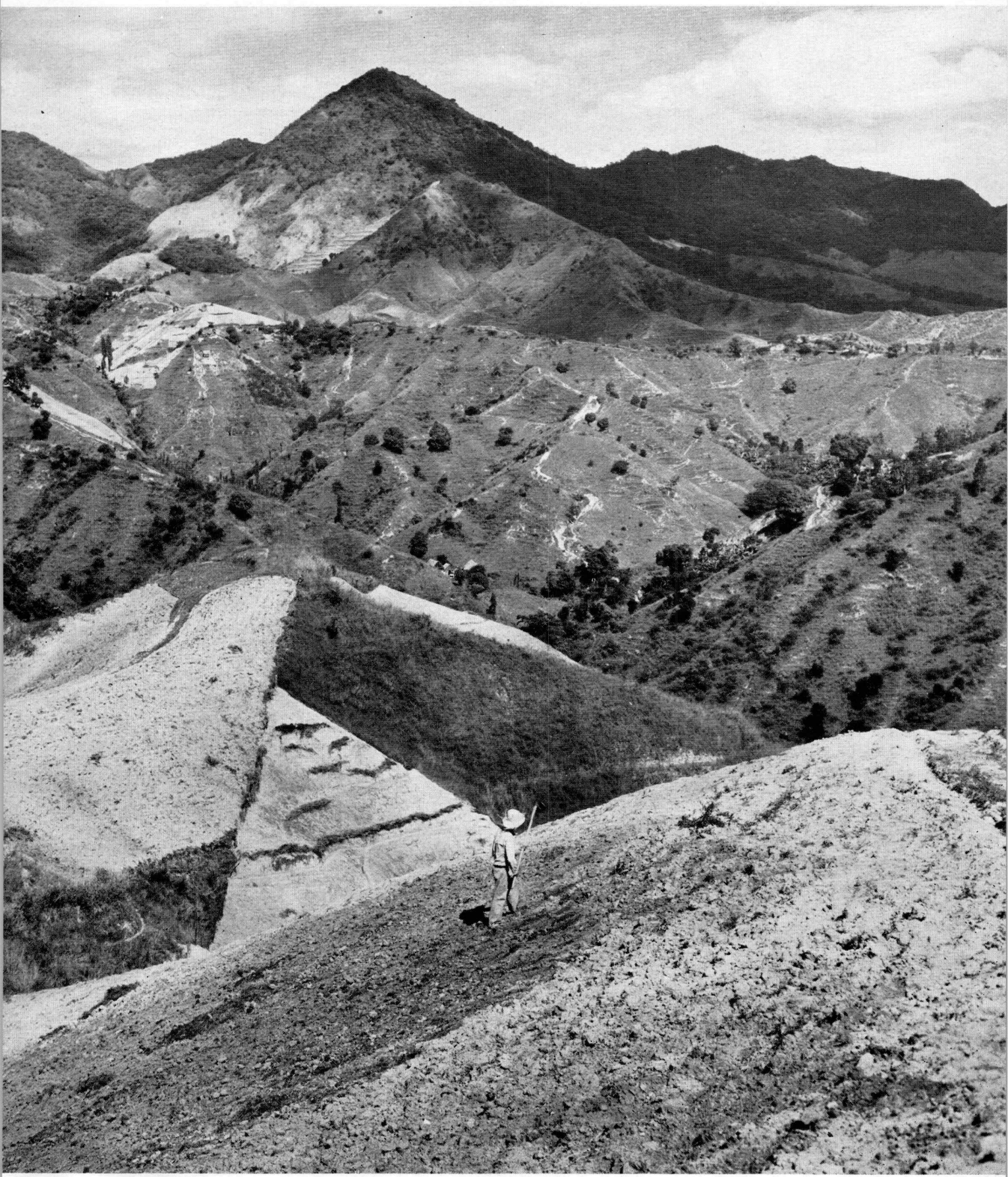
natural resources, and by the long distance from both raw materials and markets. The consequent high freight rates are further boosted by the United States Coastwise Shipping Laws. Infant industries that somehow manage to overcome these obstacles and get a start, are often strangled shortly after birth by the process of dumping, against which there is no recourse within the Federal tariff laws.

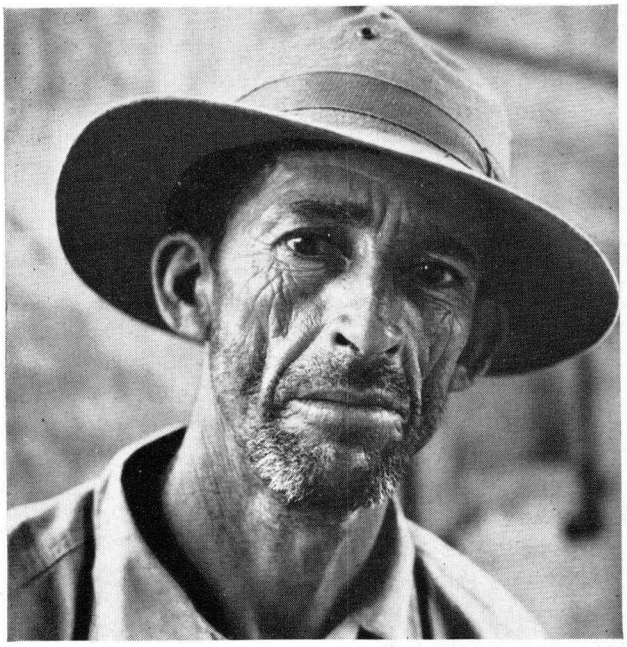
All these basic problems tie in economically with problems of education, public health, and a hundred more, to form a vicious circle of Gordian knots. The seriousness of the general situation is revealed by the fact that the income of the average person is $65.00 per year, and that of the average family, $350.00.

But in spite of the blackness of the picture, we have not cried quits. We believe that we have found the sword to cut the Gordian knots that surround us, and we have already begun hacking them away, fiber by fiber. Our weapon is the concerted, democratic action of a people who are willing to sacrifice their individual, selfish interests to the good of the country as a whole. We shall continue to wield that weapon until every last knot is cut.

PART II:
MOST OF US
LIVE ON THE LAND

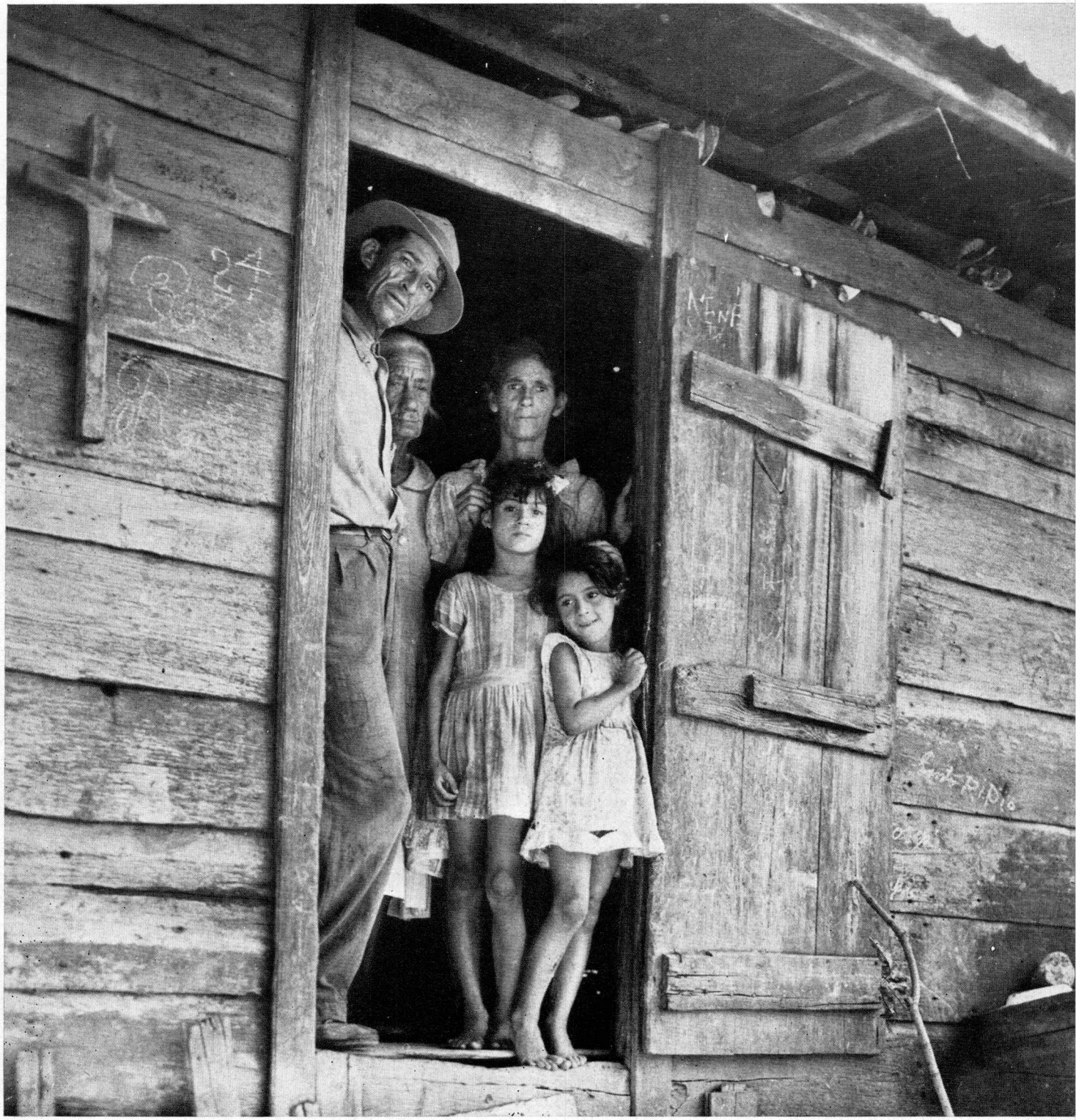






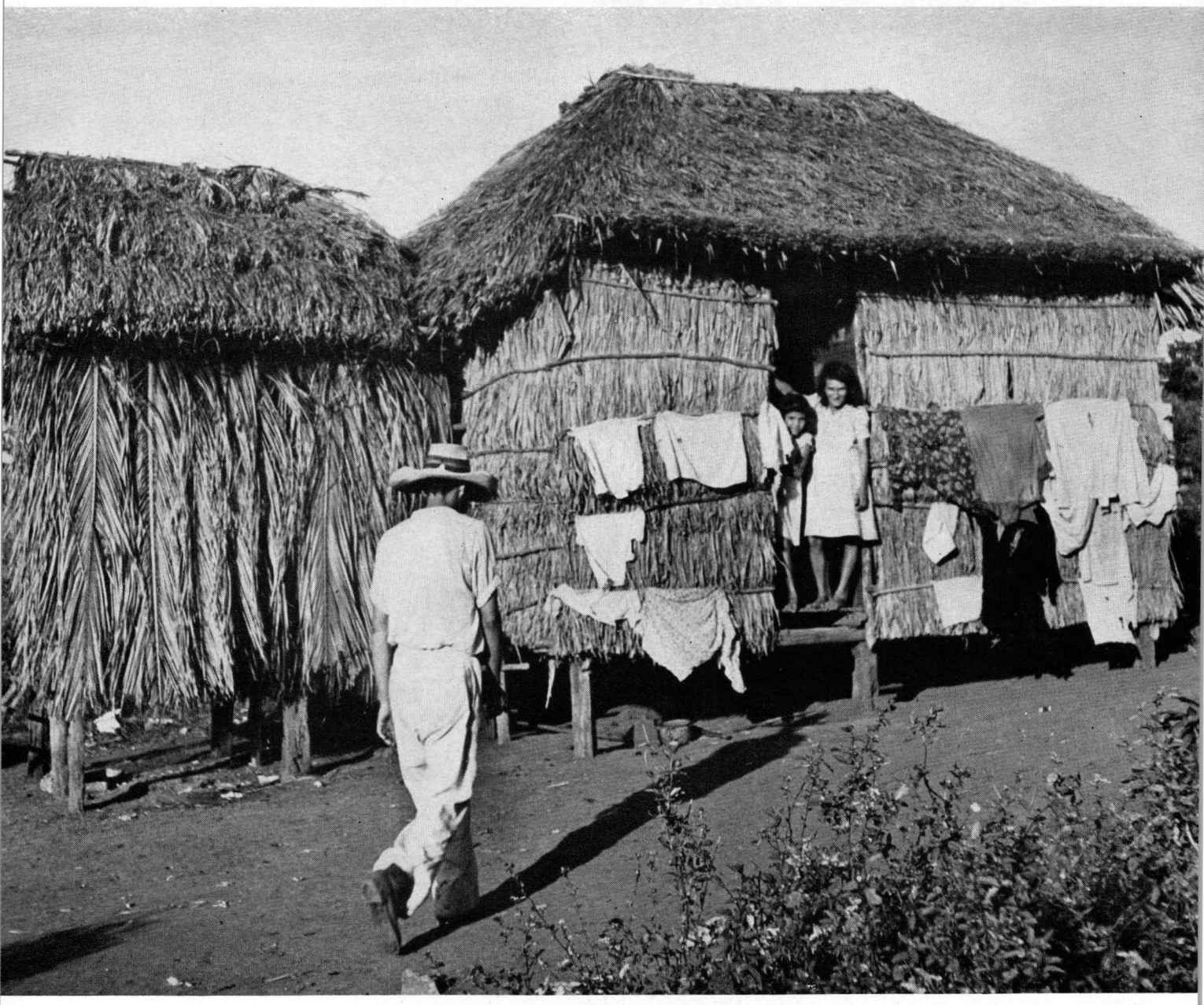
We are the dwellers on the land, the tillers of the soil, in one of the most thickly populated agricultural regions in the world. We are the custodians of the folklore among a people of age-old traditions. And we are the majority whose vote decides the elections in a country of universal suffrage. Yet, until recently, we have been the forgotten men of Puerto Rico. And even today, the recognition of our potentialities and the effort to develop these by ministering to our needs, is just beginning.

Many of us are landless peons who labor for wages on the coffee plantations, on the tobacco farms, in the cane fields. Some of us are slightly better off in that we work small acreages on shares and can raise some of our food. A steadily diminishing number of us are small landowners in our own right. We make an attempt at sub-



sistence farming, and raise bananas, plantains, and root vegetables for the local market, or plant a little patch of tobacco as a cash crop. Very few among us are large landowners even in the New England sense of the term, where a hundred acres constitute a large farm; and holdings of over 500 acres in Puerto Rico are prohibited by both Federal and Insular law.

Some of the more extensive farms belong to absentees or to owner-managers, but most of us who live from the land, also live on it and work it with our own hands.



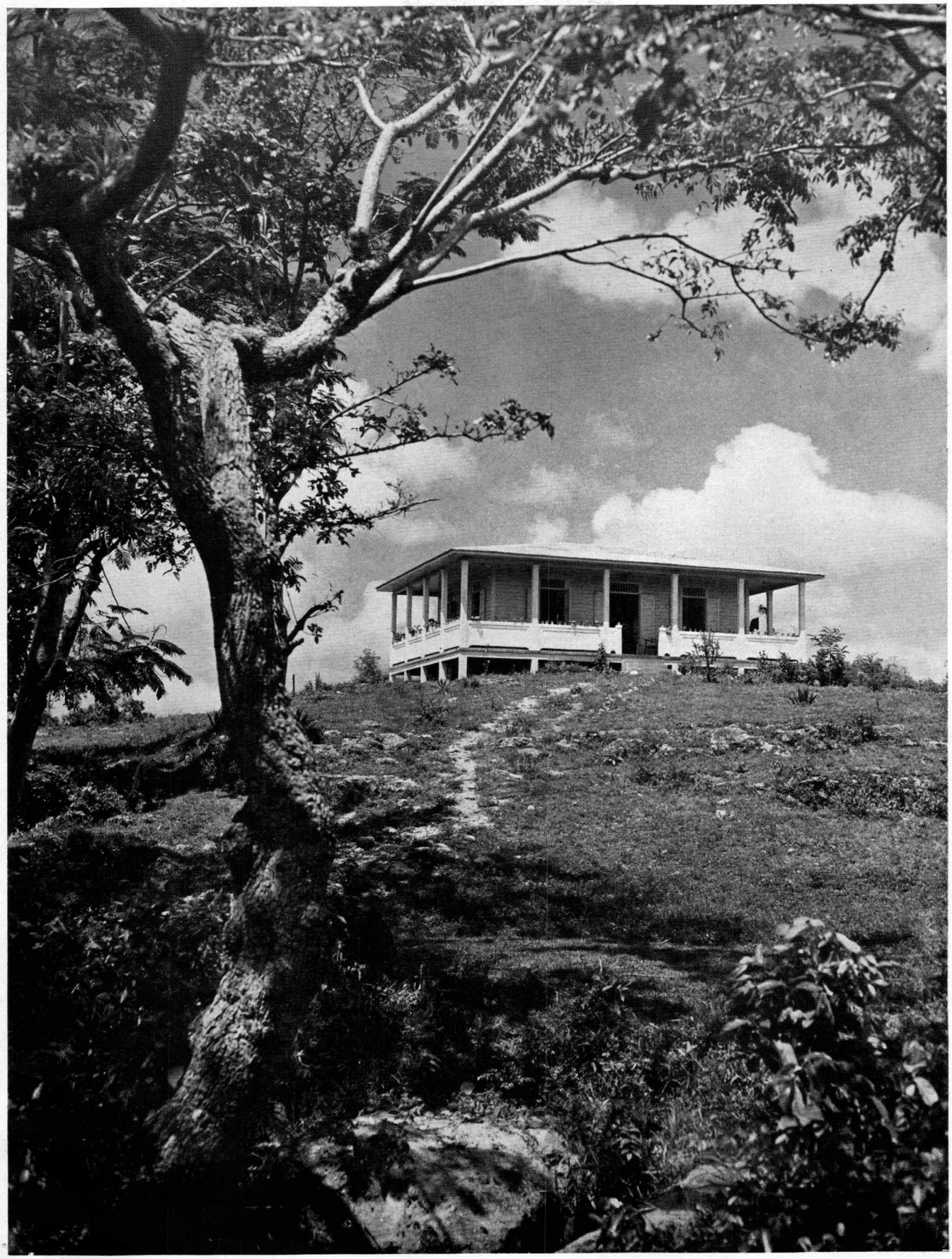
THESE ARE OUR HOMES

Our huts and houses of straw, of corrugated metal, and of wood, extend from the coffee plantations of the mountains, across the sugar fields of the plains, to the coconut groves of the seashore.

The thatched hut, often of only one room, is a direct inheritance from our Indian predecessors. We make it by raising a spindling framework of saplings and binding to it—shingle-fashion, from the bottom up—bundles of straw in overlapping rows.

Sturdier, and usually larger, are our unpainted wooden houses with roofs of corrugated metal.

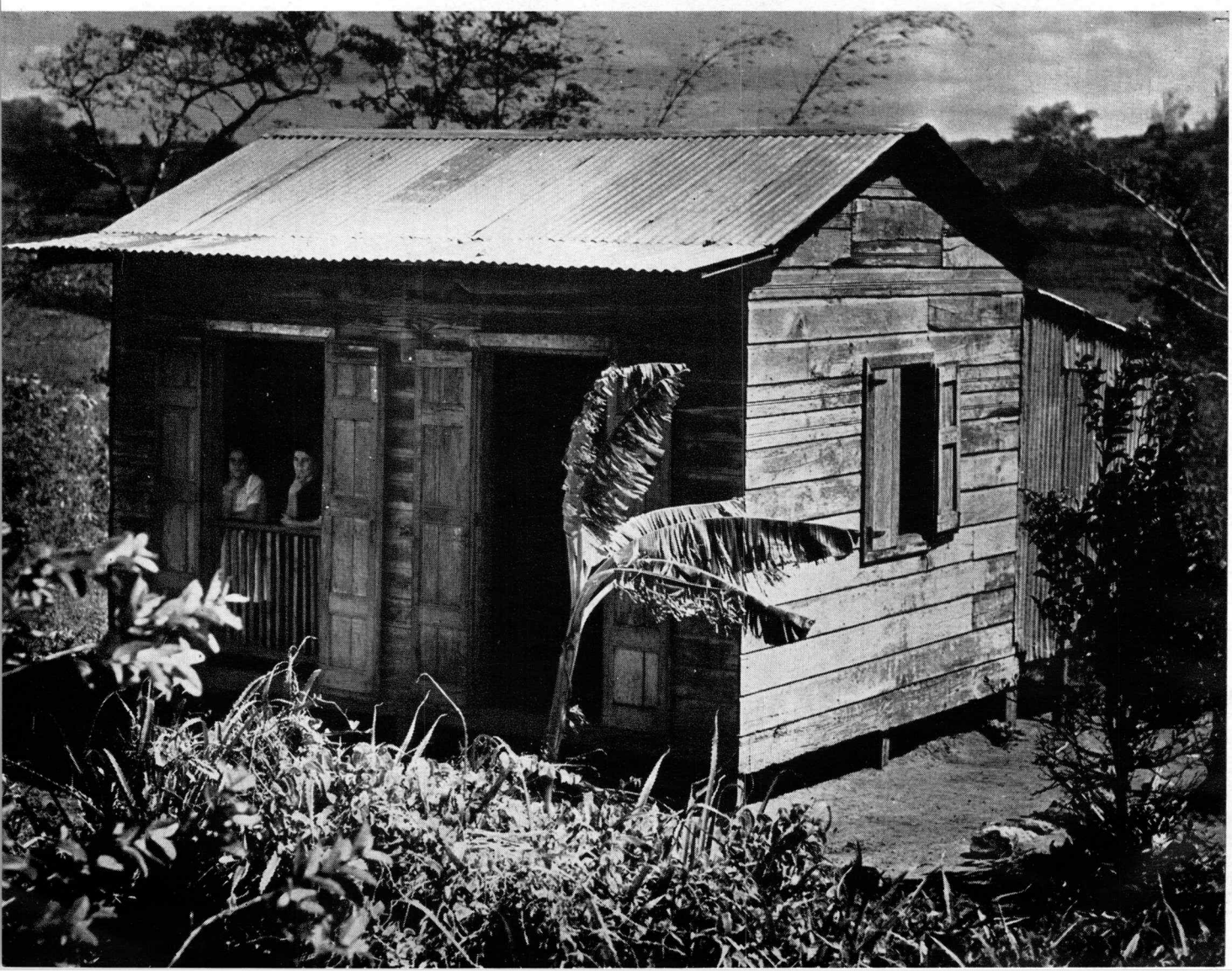
A few of the wealthier sugar planters may have modern concrete houses if, like the rest of us, they stay on the land. But even the fairly well-off among us are likely to live in buildings of weatherbeaten wood. These homes may differ from those of humbler pretensions by having tile roofs, by boasting two stories instead of one, and by being large and rambling. They often have a large balcony on the second floor where the family lives, and the first floor is frequently occupied by a country grocery or by a storeroom.

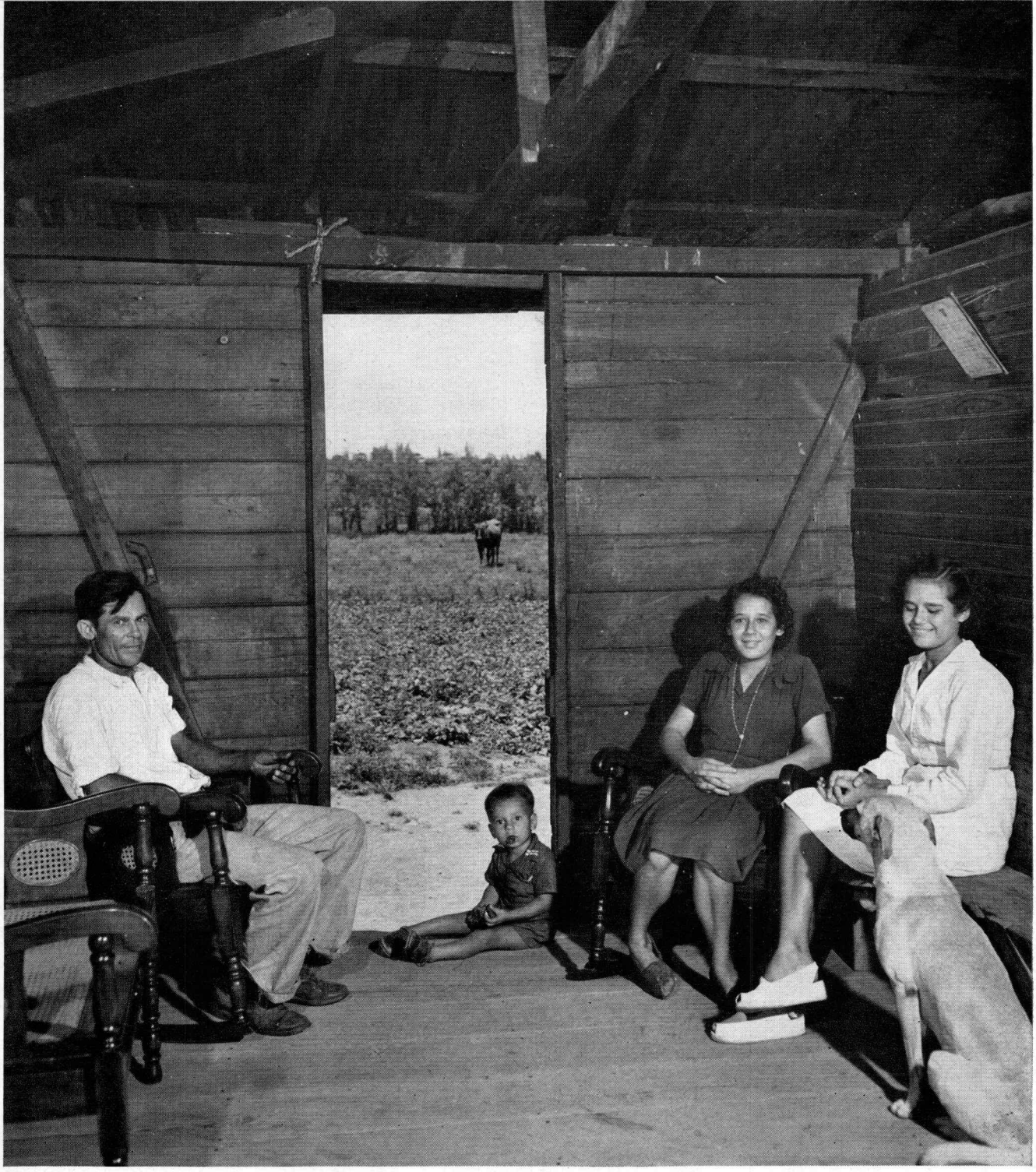


From the outside, our houses, if they are of wood, attract attention by the silver-gray patina that time leaves on their unpainted surfaces. When the land is our own, we have a yard and perhaps a flower garden, but no lawn. The yard is likely to be of bare clay, tamped down by the tread of many feet and cleanly swept with a besom every morning. A few barnyard fowl may be wandering around, or a couple of game cocks with clipped combs, plucked necks, and sharpened spurs, may be short-tethered to pegs driven into the ground. The high thatched roof of a wall-less barn, an unpretentious but plainly visible outhouse, and a squat hurricane shelter are likely to complete the picture.

Once inside one of our homes, the visitor would probably first notice the abundance of children and the prevailing spirit of hospitality. The house itself is usually ceilingless, with bare rafters, beams and uprights. The consequent atmosphere of airiness is emphasized by an abundance of open doors of the double-leaf variety that can be strongly barred at night. These usually outnumber the windows, which are simple holes in the wall, closed by a solid wooden shutter. As to furniture, there may be crude wooden benches, to supplement or take the place of the chairs, and the main room may or may not boast a hand-made table. On the walls will be a few unframed chromos, a few snapshots of the family, or the picture of a political leader who promised—and has given—a great deal to us.

If there is another room, it may contain a bed of woven steel springs, covered by a quilt in lieu of mattress. More likely there will be two or three folding canvas cots stacked against the wall or a hammock hanging in the corner, waiting to be slung across the room. Or, more likely still, all three of these artefacts may be required to furnish the numerous family with the necessary sleeping accommodations.





The kitchen will probably be in a lean-to adjoining the house. Here the "stove" will consist of a sort of sand-box on legs, furnished with stones or a tripod for supporting the kettles so that faggot fires may be built under them. The few "store" kitchen utensils are eked out by tin cans, tree-gourd bowls, a wooden mortar and pestle, and that most savory of coffee cups, the coconut shell. The rain or brook water will probably be stored in a barrel or a kerosene can.

Primitive as this kitchen may seem, our wives use it effectively to produce the most savory dishes — when we can supply the ingredients. And poor as many of our homes may be, there is something of Old World graciousness in them, and hospitality of the sort that always has enough to offer to the neighbor who is still poorer. For, after all, if God has given to us, it is so that we can share with those who are even less fortunate than we ourselves.

OUR DIET IS MEAGER

In the United States, a banana is pretty likely to be a banana, and it is still more likely to be a fruit. But here in Puerto Rico, the banana as often as not is a vegetable; and one must specify whether he is referring to the diminutive "finger" banana, the somewhat larger "date" and "apple" varieties, the "giant" eating banana, the still more massive red banana with the uncouth name, or one of the several types of plantain used principally for cooking. Bananas, it is evident, are one of our staple articles of diet. We eat them raw; we fry them; we boil them; we roast them; and we combine them with sundry ingredients to make a large variety of dishes.

Close second to the banana in popularity are the various root crops such as the yucca, the white and yellow *yautías*, the *ñame*, and a large yam-like sweet potato. We also raise breadfruit of two types. Both look something like a canteloupe, and grow on trees; of one, the boiled flesh is eaten, and of the other, the boiled chestnut-like seed. Not to be neglected is the avocado pear, prized in salads and as aider and abettor to a multiplicity of other dishes.

As for fruits, we have limes, oranges, grapefruit, pineapples, mangos, guavas, and a large number of commercially unimportant varieties such as *nísperos*, *quenepas*, *caimitos*, sweet-sops, sour-sops, *mameyes*, and rose-apples.

Despite the variety of foodstuffs offered us by nature or planted on our subsistence farms, however, we cannot raise enough to feed ourselves on the little over half an acre of tillable land per person that exists in Puerto Rico. Most of the land, and the best of it, must go into a crop of high cash value per acre—sugar. And with the money received directly or indirectly from sugar, we must import the greater part of what we eat. The imported food must be cheap, for we do not have much money to spend. What we buy the most of is rice and beans, which together constitute our staff of life—what spaghetti is supposed to be to the Italian, or potatoes to the Irishman. Our next heavy food import is salt codfish; and we also get considerable amounts of salt pork and lard.

The result of this situation is that our typical

diet would make a nutrition expert shudder. Among the poorer of us— that is, the vast majority—breakfast usually consists of a cup of black coffee for old and young; or, if the goat or cow is cooperative, coffee with milk. When the ten to fifteen dollars a week is coming in intermittently during the working season for sugar peons, or when the small farmer has sold a few bananas or a little tobacco, there will be brown sugar to sweeten the coffee and perhaps a bit of crusty bread to dunk in it. The noonday and evening meals are likely to consist of a plate of rice and beans during the prosperous season, or perhaps a piece of salt codfish and some boiled green bananas or taros. But if it is the dead season for the worker, or if the small farmer has not sold his crop, the family will be lucky to get the bananas or taros or sweet potatoes that have come from the garden. Milk is scarce, for most of us haven't enough land for much dairying; the contributions of the few barnyard hens are likely to be traded in at the store for less expensive food; and a chunk of meat constitutes a special occasion.

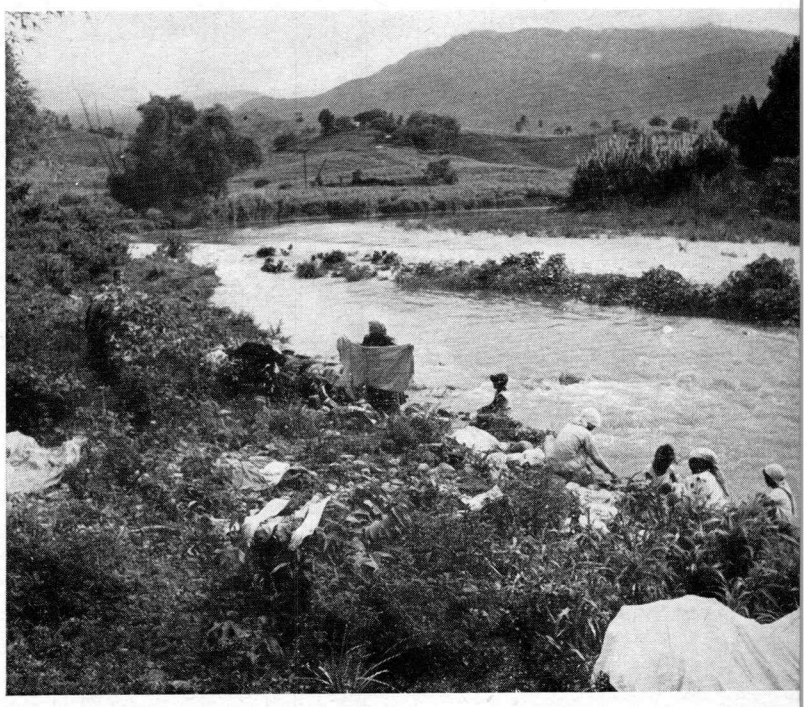
IT'S HARD TO MAKE ENDS MEET

With a diet such as ours, standards of health cannot be very high. A poorly nourished body puts up a poor fight against the attacks of hookworm, bilharzia, and malaria. And these diseases are easily acquired in our environment. Many of us must go barefoot much of the time, and hookworm abounds in the soil wherever sanitation facilities are deficient. We do our washing in the streams; sometimes we bathe in them; often we have to ford them; sometimes we have to drink their water. And almost all of these streams are infested with the deadly parasite of bilharzia. All of us live in unscreened houses, and most of us have no mosquito nets to put over our beds, cots, or hammocks. So it is not strange that we are a prey to malaria. Overcrowding, malnutrition and the weakening effects of hookworm, bilharzia, and malaria, make us susceptible to tuberculosis, which often runs through a whole family.

Add to this that there are no country doctors in Puerto Rico, and that most of us couldn't afford them if they existed. We have to rely largely on home remedies and patent medicines. Far too many of us resort in case of extreme need to the *curandero,* who is a combination of herbalist, witch-doctor, and quack. Our women call in the local midwife and the neighbors at childbirth. Sometimes the town apothecary will unofficially prescribe for our ailments. And the poorest of us often stand in line before an ill-stocked municipal dispensary. When we need an operation, most of us simply don't get it. A few of us are received in understaffed and poorly equipped municipal hospitals, and still fewer are taken as charity or semi-charity cases in private hospitals or are sent to the really excellent district hospitals, of which there are five in the Island.

Government malaria control projects have done much, however, to eliminate the anopheles mosquito. The insular health service and the schools are teaching us to avoid the propagation of tuberculosis. And the same agencies treat hookworm, encourage the building and use of latrines, and induce us to use shoes—when we can afford them.

Aside from the occasional lack of shoes, there



is nothing out of the ordinary in our clothing. We have no equivalent to the picturesque costume of certain groups of European peasants. Perhaps the nearest approach to a typical article of costume is the *pava,* a broad-brimmed hat of coarse palm straw, which has become the emblem of the largest political party on the Island. Overalls are almost unknown, and our typical working clothes are a shirt and a pair of cotton trousers. Our Sunday best includes the possible but not too likely addition of a coat, and plenty of starch in the spick-and-span shirt and trousers. Neckties with us are such a rarity that one of our political leaders has picked the necktie as a symbol of class division, comparable to the white collar a few years ago in the United States.

Our women are expert seamstresses, and, within their means, they dress like everybody else on the Island. Not a few of them have reached such a state of virtuosity with the needle that they can look at an illustration in the latest mail-order catalog, and, without benefit of pattern, cut out and sew a perfect copy and a perfect fit.

All in all, however, we spend but a small proportion of our money on clothing and still less on medical services. Most of our income must go for food, and even so we are unable to afford anything like a healthful diet.

THIS IS WHAT WE GROW

When our Spanish ancestors first colonized this island, they hoped to find rich gold deposits. The scanty supply that awaited them, was soon exhausted, however; and from that time till this, Puerto Rico has subsisted mainly by farming. The vegetables cultivated by the Indians—yucca, corn, sweet potatoes, peanuts, tobacco, and peppers — still grow in our fields today, though all of them except tobacco have fallen to the rank of minor crops. The wild cotton and the pineapples of the aboriginees have given way to cultivated varieties. Certain early importations that were once important crops—ginger, cacao, indigo—have now all but disappeared. Others, like coffee, coconuts, limes, oranges, grapefruit, breadfruit, rice, beans, bananas, and sugar cane are still planted in varying quantities.

Truck crops such as lettuce, radishes, cucumbers, melons, tomatoes, and carrots are less plentiful than in the United States; and most of these are raised for local consumption. So also are the various bananas and plantains, breadfruit, and root crops. But in addition to what we can raise, the country has to import large amounts of rice, beans, potatoes, and canned vegetables every year.

Coffee, at the turn of the century, was one of the principal products of the Island, and one of which we were justly proud. Because of its rich flavor, our coffee was prized as an after-dinner beverage and commanded fancy prices throughout Europe. But two world wars, the American tariff, and the Puerto Rican hurricanes have conspired together to reduce our coffee industry to a point where it can barely supply our own needs. The quality of our product, however, is still attested by the protests that arise whenever a special emergency forces Puerto Ricans to resort to any coffee not grown on their own highlands. And among the many things that we admire in the American way of life, one most emphatically is *not* the brew that you dignify with the name of coffee.

Many of the coconuts grown on the Island are picked green and refrigerated with the outer husk on. After the top is hacked off with a machete, they furnish a most refreshing and sanitary drink. Small coconut oil and coconut

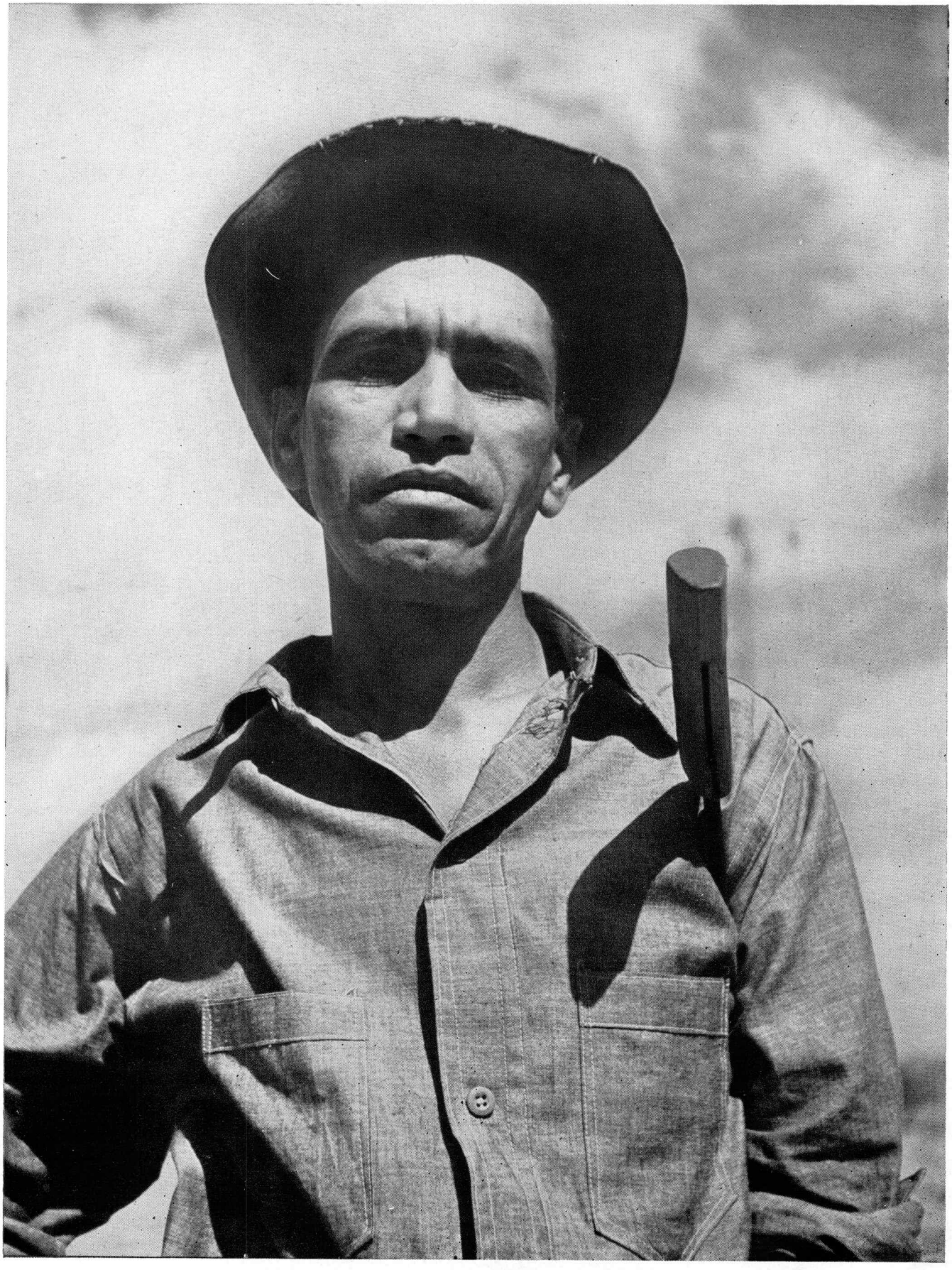
fiber industries have also arisen, and the Peter Paul Company has recently established a factory for shredding coconut.

Oranges and grapefruit were considerably cultivated soon after the American occupation. The Texas plantings and Florida competition, however, soon put these enterprises out of the class of big business, and the market today is largely local except for a few canned products.

Pineapple growing, while limited to a comparatively small area, has been a more stable and profitable enterprise than the raising of citrus fruits.

Cotton has never been extensively planted in Puerto Rico, but the small amount that we do raise is of the sea-island, long-fiber type and brings excellent prices.

Tobacco, though it has a very uncertain market, is still a relatively important crop. Our tobacco is a fairly "strong," but high quality cigar type with a distinctive aroma. We smoke some of it ourselves, export much of the rest as cigars or leaf, and use the inferior qualities for "twists" of chewing tobacco and strong cigarettes. But most of us, though we thoroughly detest American coffee, prefer the milder tasting American cigarettes to our own—we are eclectic in our tastes.



SUGAR IS KING

All other agricultural enterprises put together, however, count as nothing beside sugar cane. In fact, for all practical purposes, Puerto Rico may be considered a one-crop country. One-fifth of the arable land of the Island—practically all of the best land—is planted to cane.

Many people have deplored this situation, but the reason for it is not hard to find. Sugar cane is the one product with a relatively stable market that also has a high cash value. Furthermore, cane has the advantage of being processed on the Island. All of our cane is converted into sugar, molasses, and rum (and some of the sugar is refined) right here in Puerto Rico, thus offering employment to industrial as well as agricultural workers.

It is but natural, therefore, that much of our most fertile land should be planted to sugar cane in preference to other crops. Circumstances have forced us into a one-crop economy. But that does not mean that we consider the situation ideal. On the contrary, we know from bitter experience that no one crop can furnish a stable basis for the prosperity of a country. We know that, in the case of sugar and rum, our profits depend to a large extent upon fortuitous circumstances over which we have no control. In a politically unstable world, market conditions of our one important product may change disastrously almost overnight. A modification of the United States tariff might wipe out in a moment the advantage of a dollar per hundredweight that we now enjoy over Cuba and Santo Domingo. Our quota may be reduced by government regulation.

Add to these disadvantages the fact that, with our best land planted to sugar cane, we have to import most of our foodstuffs. And those that we can afford to import are largely cheap concentrations of carbohydrates, with low mineral and vitamin contents. They are by no means a satisfactory substitute for home-raised products.

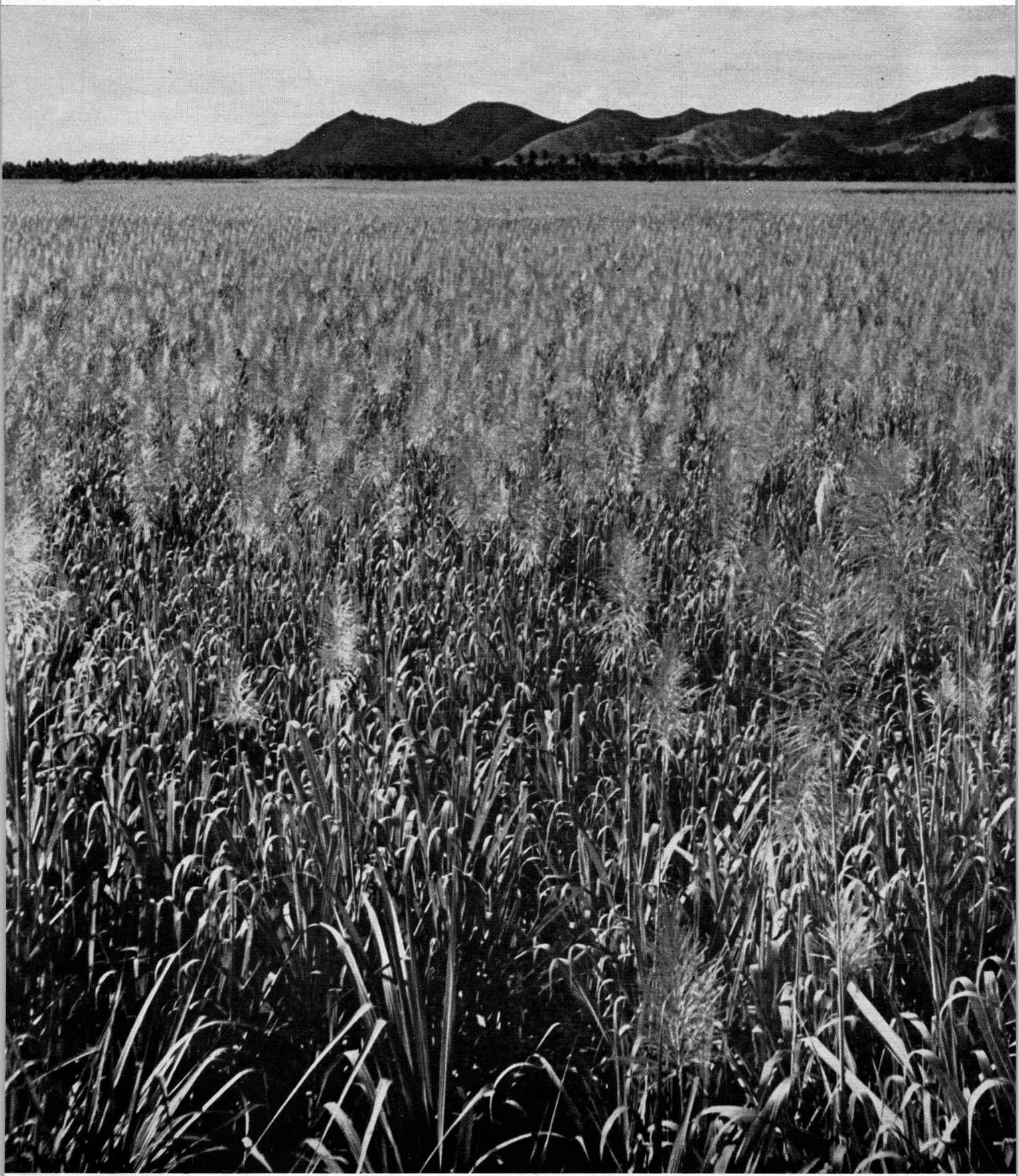
Furthermore, cane growing is a large-scale enterprise, and the extension of this type of agriculture has tended to eliminate the small and medium farmer; to make any small cane growers who manage to survive, dependent upon the large sugar corporations; and to stimulate absentee ownership.

It is evident, therefore, to all concerned that our one-crop sugar economy is a highly unsatisfactory state of affairs. But while we are looking for a way out, we must continue to plant the productive and remunerative cane.

From December to February the *guajanas* or tassels of the sugar cane wave over the rich lands of our river valleys and coastal plains. In some districts, the natural rainfall is sufficient to produce a plentiful crop, whereas in others, we must resort to irrigation. In these fields, the ditchers must work knee-deep in malaria-breeding water and mud, under a broiling tropic sun, for their meager wage.

The planting season comes in spring and summer, when the short sections of old cane used as seed, are half buried in the long furrows of the field. Then, after twelve to eighteen months of growing season, during which the cane is weeded and cultivated, comes the harvest.

The cane harvest is so important that our language has a special word for it, used in relation to no other crop—the *zafra*.



When the *zafra* begins, the sugar growers hire extra crews of workers, some of them subsistence farmers from the lean lands on the hillsides. Those who live farthest away must get up before daylight, sometimes as early as four o'clock. With their lanterns or with torches made of a cloth wick stuck in a bottle of kerosene, they file down the narrow mountain trails. On the main highways, one no longer meets groups of laborers shouldering the heavy field hoes of the cultivating season. During the *zafra,* the workers come armed with sharp ox-goads and with their machetes, keen knives with heavy blades nearly two feet long.

The rhythmic flash of the canecutter's machete in the sun rivals the grace, but not the effortlessness, of a ballet routine. A diagonal cut severs the stalks at the base; a second stroke lops off the leafy tops; and a third one divides the long cane in two. Then the cutter tosses the segments into a row, to be gathered by the carters.

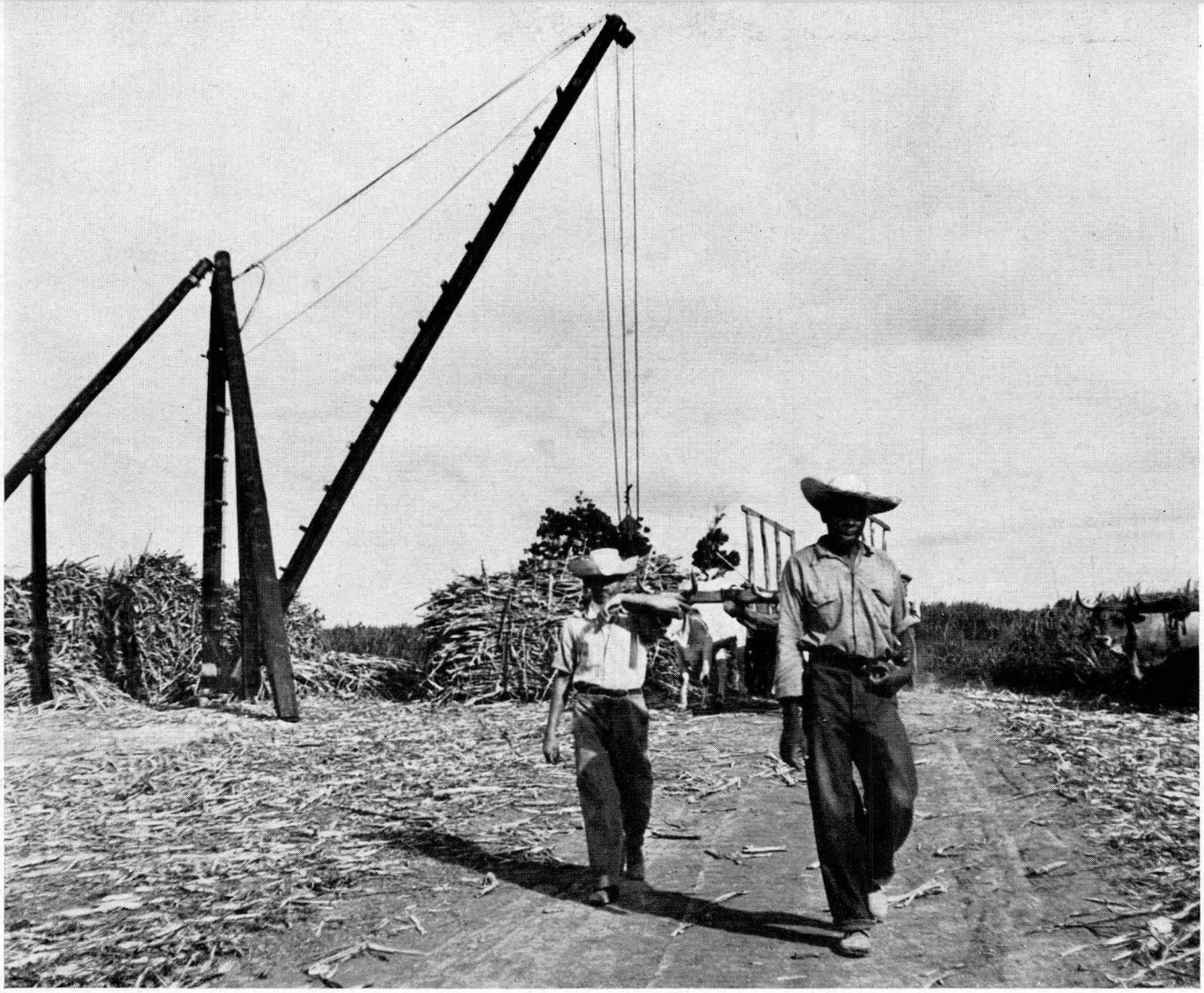
Behind the cutters come the lumbering ox-carts. Occasionally these have been modernized with huge pneumatic tires to make easier traction over the uneven ground. Or, in the larger and more level plantations, movable narrow-gauge tracks are sometimes laid, and the oxen

draw cars along these. The cane is taken from the fields, and loaded by cranes into railroad cars or trucks which take it to the *central* or sugar mill to be ground.

Meanwhile the machetes of the cutters continue to slash at the standing cane. Only occasionally does a worker break the rhythm of his task for a tepid drink from the pail of the waterboy.

When the noon whistle blows, the men seek the shade, if any is available. The wives or children of those who live nearby have arrived with bottles of coffee and triple- and quadruple-decker lunch pails for the various members of the family. Here are rice and beans, root vegetables, perhaps a fritter or two or a boiled banana, possibly a bit of salt codfish. For those who have come down from the hills, a chunk of bread and a can of sardines or a few slices of mortadella will be the first food since the cup of black coffee drunk at three or four o'clock in the morning. The pace of the work would be impossible for long on such nourishment; but the *zafra* lasts only from three to six months.

For this type of work the average canecutter earns $2.25 a day. If his entire employment in the canefield amounts to 150 days out of the year (and during part of this time he receives only $2.02 a day for hoeing and cultivating), his annual income will not be much over $325.00. Even this is a great deal better than earlier conditions, when the sugar growers paid as little as seventy cents a day. Some of this improvement has been due to minimum wage laws; but much of it is the direct result of the struggles of the workers themselves. When their unions were in their infancy, the mournful sound of the conch-shell, echoing from hill to hill, announced frequent strikes throughout the countryside; and company violence and worker retaliation were common. Today, employers have learned to accept, or at least to tolerate, unions; the government



has outlawed unfair labor practices; and these conditions, together with government arbitration, have made strikes less prevalent. A considerable number of our agricultural workers belong to the equivalent of an industrial union, and contracts with sugar growers are often made on an Island-wide basis.

The arduous workday of the canecutter ends early. At four o'clock he knocks off and goes back to his hut.

And his season's work also ends early. The 150 days that he may put in during the year, will perhaps be spread out from February to November. Then thousands of us are laid off. The "dead season" has begun.

The dead season, dramatized by Méndez Ballester in a tragedy bearing that title (*Tiempo muerto*), often, indeed, turns out to be a tragic time for the worker. Like many tragedies, it begins in a lighter vein. The hard labor of the year is over; it is payday; let's celebrate!

But the celebration doesn't last long. Soon faces become more serious and belts have to be tightened. The landlord must be paid, for we must still have a roof over our heads, even though it be a leaky one of rusty metal. Debts increase at the store, for even a pennysworth of this today and a nickelsworth of that tomorrow mount up at the end of a couple of months.

Lucky those of us who own subsistence farms. We have bananas and plantains, sweet potatoes and dasheens to eat. These are at least filling—sometimes too much so; witness the pallid, potbellied children of the countryside.

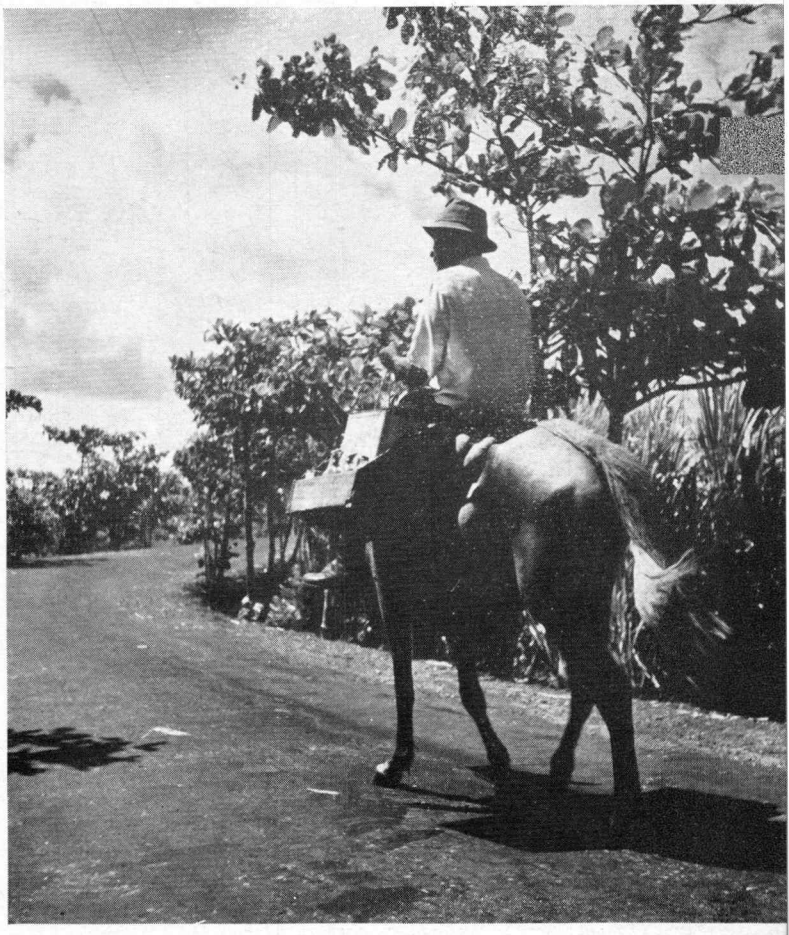
Lucky those of us whose wives can get jobs at tobacco stemming or needlework, or who ourselves can work at roadmaking.

But to get through a two-month dead season after having earned a little over three hundred dollars during the rest of the year, is no joke, however one tries to do it. Sugar is sweet, but not to the caneworker.

IT'S A LONG WAY TO TOWN

Living as we do in semi or complete isolation, the problem of getting from one place to another is a real one for us. For many, walking is the only solution to that problem, and we cover tremendous distances on foot. Our nonchalant estimate that a place is "just a cock's crow away" should be taken at face value only by those who are thoroughly sound of wind and limb.

Even the seriously ill are taken to town in a hammock slung to a bamboo pole and carried on



the shoulders of two relatives or neighbors, eight or ten of whom may alternate on a long journey.

Some of us also have horses, small but tough and sure-footed ponies bred to the mountain trails. These we use both for riding and for carrying loads in side baskets or boxes. In certain parts of the Island, mules perform similar duties.

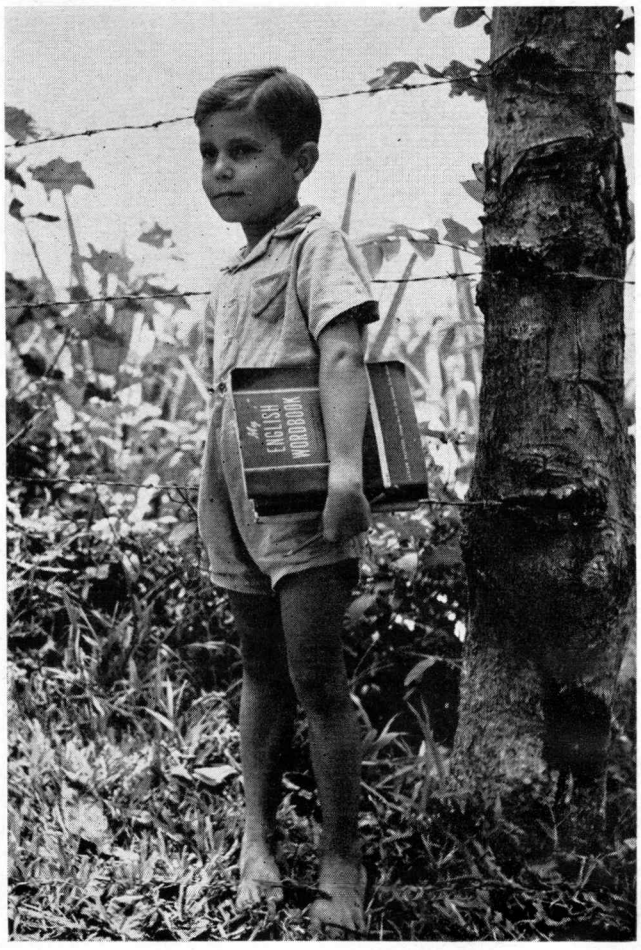
Once we reach the main road, there are cars, buses, and trucks to take us and our produce into town. A car or station-wagon, loaded to the gunwales with passengers and their packages, may also have a squealing pig tied to the rear luggage carrier. Buses similarly cater to our needs. The drivers often do our errands for us, and they allow us to ride with our baskets of vegetables or our sacks of grain. Nobody ever thinks of complaining because some one else is being accommodated; and the trip to town is filled with the cheerful give and take of pleasantries. In transportation as elsewhere, we make a social virtue of our necessities.

RURAL SCHOOLING IS SCANTY

Rural education is likely to be a pretty sketchy affair. Some of us cannot afford to send our sons and daughters to school. For some of us no nearby schools are available. And others can find no room for our children in already overcrowded classrooms. The result is that two-thirds of our children are not in school at all.

Of those fortunate enough to get to school, thirty-seven percent never get beyond the third grade. And even these meager educational facilities are further limited by the fact that most rural schools offer only half-day sessions. So the equivalent of a year and a half of genuine schooling is all that most rural youngsters can look forward to.

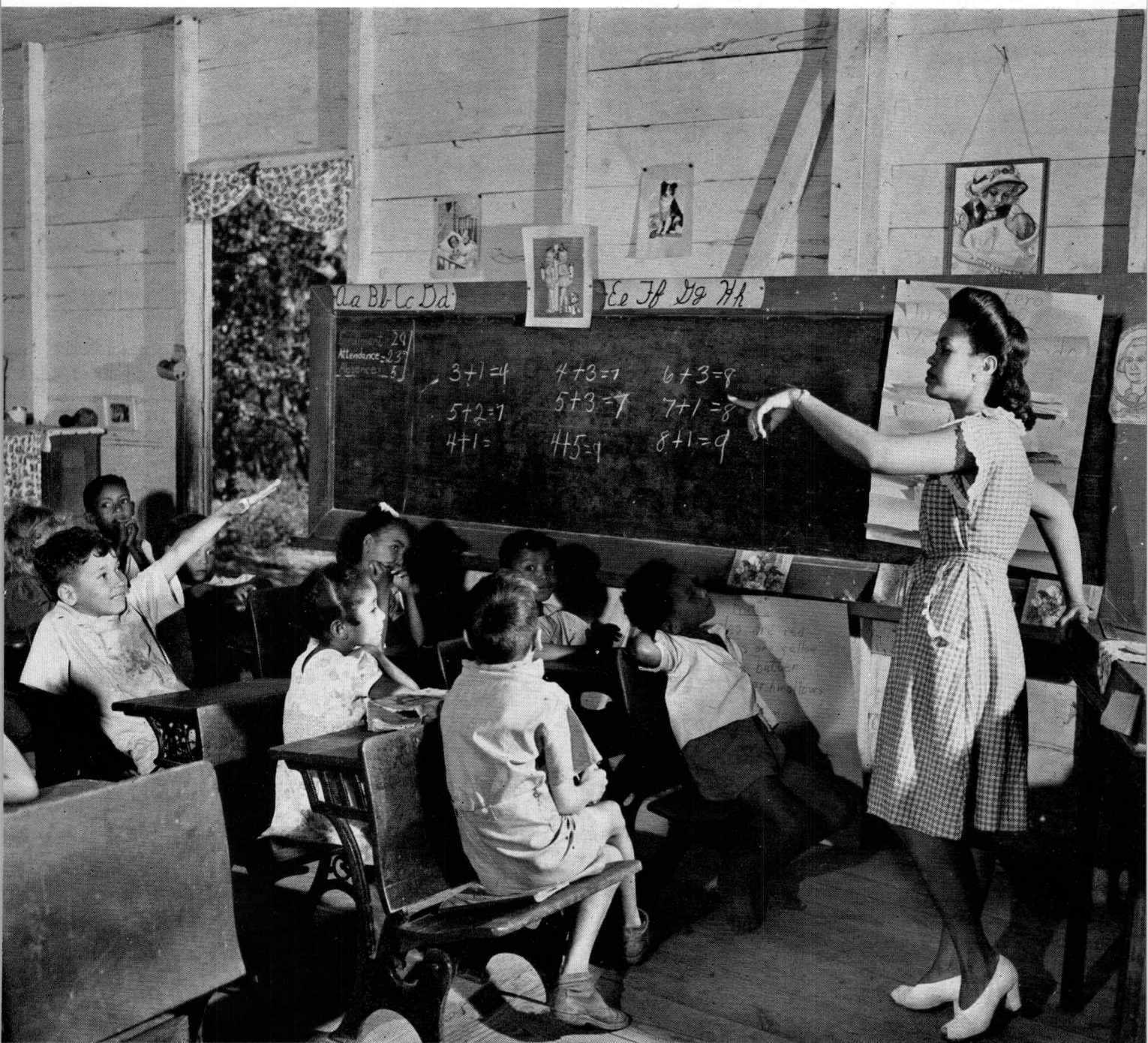
Typical of our rural schools is the one-room structure where the same tired teacher takes charge of a first grade in the morning and second and third grades in the afternoon—a total of eighty or ninety pupils every day. Until recently, less preparation was required of rural than of urban teachers, and the rural salaries were likewise inferior. In other words, in a predominantly agricultural country, the educational system pro-



vides the poorest instruction for the children of its largest and most important group of citizens —the tillers of the soil.

Today all permanently appointed elementary teachers are required to have at least a two-year normal school diploma; and all teachers, rural and urban alike, begin with the same basic salary. But still the tendency is to send the poorer or less experienced teachers and the oldest textbooks to the country schools.

Our equivalent of the little red schoolhouse is likely not to be red. It may be a weatherbeaten wooden structure mounted on stilts atop a windswept hill; or it may be a more modern cement building. Where conditions permit, instead of the one-room school, there may be two-, three-, or four-teacher consolidation. Even these, however, represent nothing much better than pure and unadulterated urban education transplanted but in no wise adapted to the country.



New trends and new possibilities are seen in the so-called "second-unit" rural schools. These, comprising grades seven to nine, are often grouped together with the primary grades to form large school nuclei. The "second units" are a real rural school, in which half the time is devoted to academic subjects and the other half to vocational pursuits such as agriculture, home economics, native handicrafts, shoemaking, plumbing, and electricity. These schools also serve as community centers and foment such activities as the "Four-H Clubs," "Future Farmers of America," and other projections of the classroom into the community.

At present, out of an entire rural enrollment of 170,000 pupils, about 14,000 are taken care of in second-unit schools. Though instruction of this type is admittedly superior to that given in other rural schools, it is slow in spreading because it is much more expensive.

WE SING, WE DANCE, WE PRAY

Puerto Rico is thickly populated; and a parachute jumper might land almost anywhere on the Island without getting beyond shouting distance of at least one house. However, most of our homes are scattered along roads and mountain trails rather than being grouped in villages. This semi-isolation has its effect upon the pattern of our social life.

Except where a second-unit school has become a community center, the country store is likely to be a favorite meeting place for the men of the countryside. Though this shrine lacks the cracker barrel and the pot-bellied stove of its New England counterpart, it fulfills the same social function. It is here that we get together to talk over politics, crops, and local gossip; and here too, if there is a radio, we stock up on the latest news or listen to the equivalent of a fireside chat by our political leader.

Besides the informal gatherings in the country store, some of us attend cockfights and even raise fighting fowl of our own. But the zest departed forever from cockfighting when the Insular Legislature made it legal; and most of us prefer to spend our money more profitably.

Dances are another amusement of which we are fond. A typical country orchestra is composed of a guitar, a mandolin-like instrument known as the *cuatro,* and a long serrated gourd called a *güícharo,* which is scraped with a wire fork to furnish the percussion. An accordion sometimes completes the ensemble.

The dancing is largely confined to the younger, unmarried couples, while the oldsters look on from the sidelines and reminisce. No man may dance with another's sweetheart; and if the attempt is made, either unwittingly or intentionally, there is likely to be a fight.

Of the various types of dances that we favor, one of the most interesting is the *seis bombea'o.* In this, dancing proceeds as usual until the music suddenly stops and someone announces the first *bomba.* The dancers then file in front of the orchestra, and each man improvises a four-line verse in honor of his partner. The music starts up again and dancing continues until the next *bomba* is called. Then it is the turn of the ladies to reply, likewise in verse, to the rhymed gallantries of which they have been the objects.

A more complicated form of folk poetry is our *décima.* It is ordinarily composed of four ten-line stanzas, each ending in one of the lines of a prefatory quatrain. The *décima,* like the *bomba,* is usually an improvisation, and it is also sung to the accompaniment of the guitar, always to the same tune. The *décima* may treat of any theme: love, the latest murder, the new bridge near Don Juan's house, or the less recent stories of Charlemagne or even Biblical characters. In the last electoral campaign, this type of composition left its ordinary environment of the country dance or social gathering; and a professional *décima* singer produced a daily grist of political propaganda for the radio program of one of the contending parties. Even opponents tuned in to listen.

Get-togethers in the country store, cock-fights, dances, and *décima* singing, are of course, strictly secular amusements. A great deal of our social life, however, is, in one way or another, tied up with our religion.

All of us join in the typical festivities of the Christmas and Three Kings' season. Even the poorest of us usually raise a pig for the occasion. If we can't afford to use it all up in a barbecue, we make some of the lean meat into *butifarras* and *longanizas,* two types of sausage, and fry the rest in small chunks or glorify it in the dish of rice-and-pork-with-pigeon-peas. The liver, kidneys, and lungs are chopped up fine and stewed with just the right herbs and spices to make the prized *gandinga,* to be eaten with boiled rice. The grease is fried out of the fat meat to leave the crunchy *chicharrones* or cracklings. And the intestines that have not been preempted for *butifarras* and *longanizas,* are filled with rice and blood to make the peppery *morcilla.*

After the late porker has undergone all these pleasing metamorphoses and when the rice pudding flavored with cinnamon is ready, guests begin to arrive from far and near. And they keep coming all day long and day after day. A *música* is coming up the road. It is composed of eight men, women, and children. They stop before a neighbor's house and sing their Christmas carol to the accompaniment of the guitar, the

cuatro, and the *güícharo.* After the second verse, the owner of the house shouts cordially, "Come in, all! Come in!" The singers enter one by one. "Be seated, my friends." They chat for a few minutes. Then the hostess brings on the food. No one can refuse. Neither previous meals nor chronic indigestion are within the realm of acceptable excuses today.

"Some more, my friend."

"Many thanks, Don Pancho, but I really can't. I . . ."

"But you must! You haven't tried this *morcilla* yet, and here are some boiled green bananas to go with it."

"Well, since you insist . . ."

And then the *música* leaves, on its way to the next house; but soon another *música* will appear.

It may take Don Pancho a couple of months to pay off his debts, but he doesn't even think of that. This is the Christmas season, and one must eat, drink and be merry. Above all, we must maintain at whatever cost, our traditional hospitality of the rural Puerto Rican home, and rich and poor must be welcomed and feasted.

Weddings, christenings, wakes, and *rosarios cantados* are other occasions that combine, in varying degrees, the religious observance with the social event.

Our rural *rosario cantado,* apparently unique to Puerto Rico, is the devotion of the rosary, set to folk music.

The Rodríguez family has been invited to a *rosario cantado* at Compa'e Mario's house. (A *compa'e* is the godparent of your child or the parent of your godchild, and the relationship is an exceedingly important one in the social structure of the rural community.) Compa'e Mario's little boy has been ailing for some time. Home remedies didn't seem to help; the doctor at the municipal hospital prescribed a medicine that cost a lot of money; and even the herb-woman with her potions and charms was powerless. So the family decided to offer *rosarios* for the child's recovery. They borrowed religious pictures and images of saints from their neighbors, erected an altar on a table covered with a flowered tablecloth lent by the Baptist Pérez's. The children of the neighborhood adorned the altar with palm branches and flowers, and four candles were lighted before the images. Shortly after sundown, the neighbors begin to arrive.

"Good evening, Don Mario. Good evening, Doña Gertrudis."

"Good evening! Come in, all of you."

And in they come—old folks, young folks, and children. On the benches at the sides of the altar sit the leaders of the *rosarios*. Behind them are the men and women who sing the responses. First, as everybody crosses himself, there comes the recitative in monotone: POR LA SEÑAL DE LA SANTA CRUZ, DE NUESTROS ENEMIGOS LÍBRANOS, SEÑOR, DIOS NUESTRO, EN EL NOMBRE DEL PADRE, DEL HIJO Y DEL ESPIRITU SANTO, ¡AMÉN!

Then, accompanied by the guitar, follow the chanted portions with their endless repetitions and responses. After each *rosario*, which lasts an hour and a half or two hours, the singers rest before starting in on the next one. At the midnight intermission, Doña Gertrudis brings in steaming cups of chocolate and big round crackers. The older children, who have been sleeping on the cot, in the hammock, and on the floor, wake up and share the refreshments with their parents, and a few of the men partake of a discreet glass of rum with Don Mario. Then the *rosarios* continue until dawn, and Doña Gertrudis once more appears, this time with fragrant black coffee and more crackers; and the men have their farewell tot of rum with Don Mario.

"Adiós, Don Mario. Adiós, Doña Gertrudis. May the little one get better!"

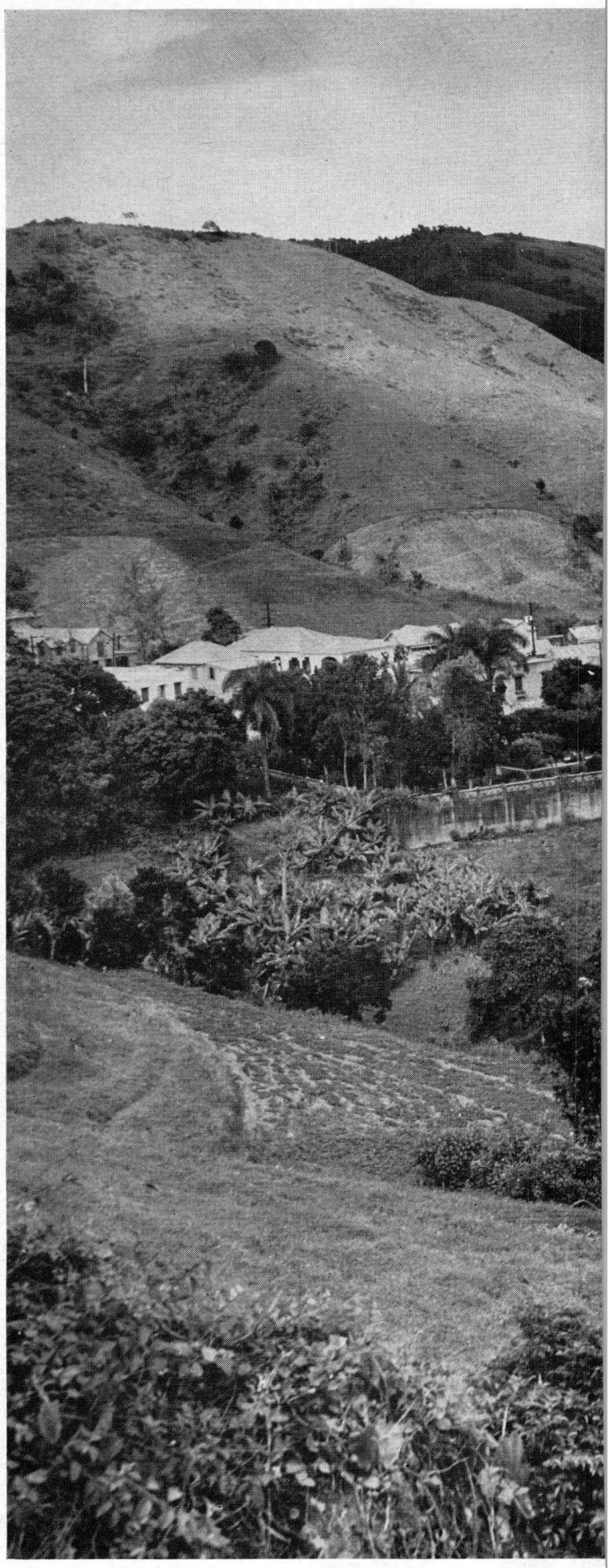
"Adiós, my friends, and thank you all. Go with God, and may the Virgin Mary accompany you."

Though we live on the land, our religious life also connects us with the town. There we are christened, married, and buried; and there we flock on high feast days to participate in observances and pageantry that hark back to the Middle Ages.

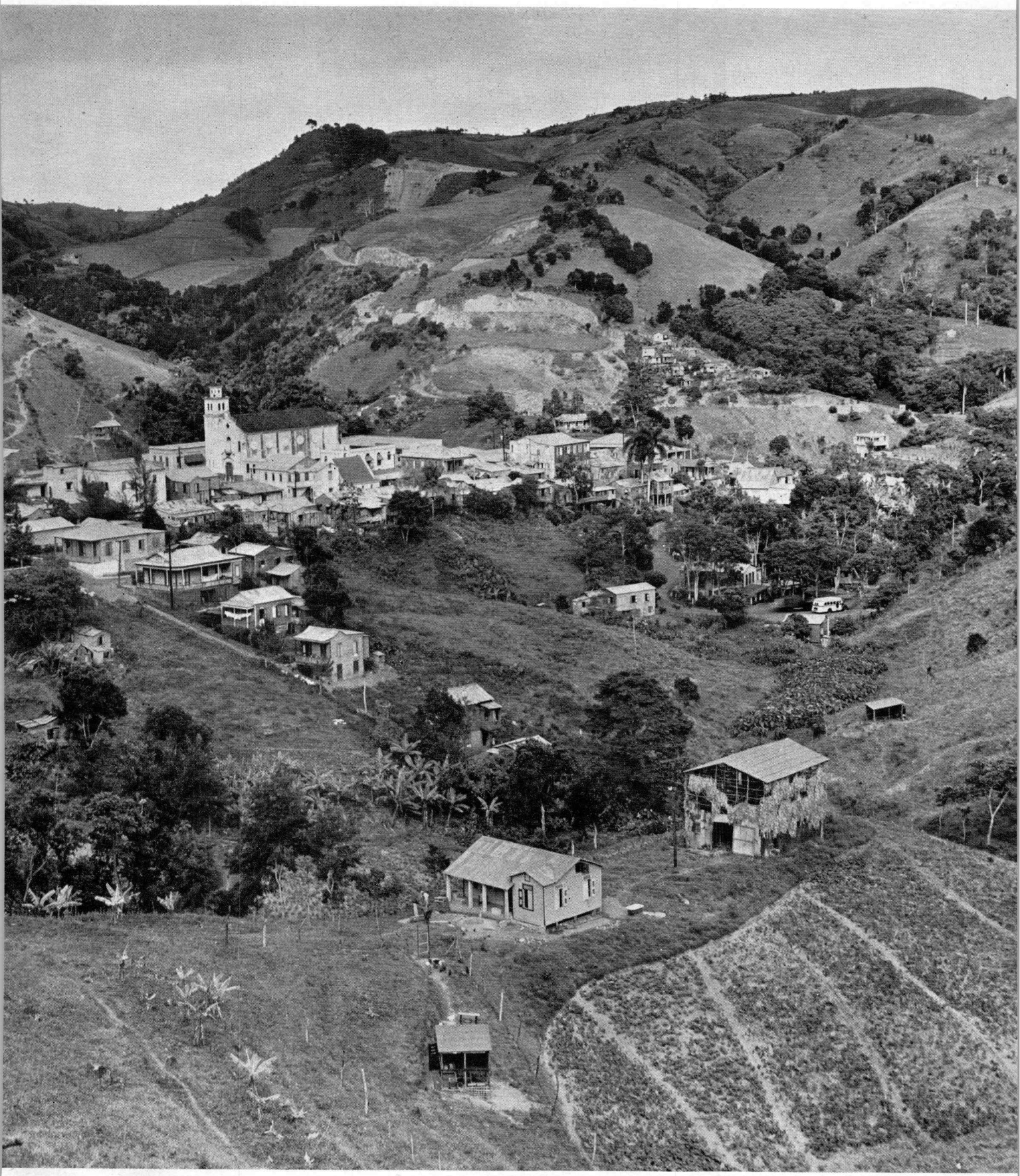
On Good Friday, for example, after the short morning services, a guard of honor kneels before the Holy Sepulchre for the rest of the day. At one in the afternoon, a sermon is preached on the Seven Words of Christ on the cross. At five, we take part in the procession of the Holy Burial, with its images of the Mater Dolorosa, Saint Joseph, and Christ in the sepulchre. Some of the marchers carry banners, and others represent Saint Veronica, the Apostles, the Virgin, angels, the two thieves, and other personages associated with the crucifixion.

At nine in the evening, there is the procession of the *Soledad.* The Mater Dolorosa, accompanied mostly by women, each with a lighted candle, goes through the town.

These age-old traditions are dear to the hearts of the Puerto Rican people, especially to those of us who live on the land and who are the repositories of the ancient folklore of our race.



PART III:
THE REST OF US LIVE IN THE TOWNS AND CITIES



Our towns and cities are divided into first, second, and third classes, not according to any standard of quality, but by size. The statistics upon which this classification is based, include urban, suburban, and rural dwellers; for each town or city in Puerto Rico is merely the largest clot of population in a municipal district comparable to a New England township or to a parish in some of the Southern states.

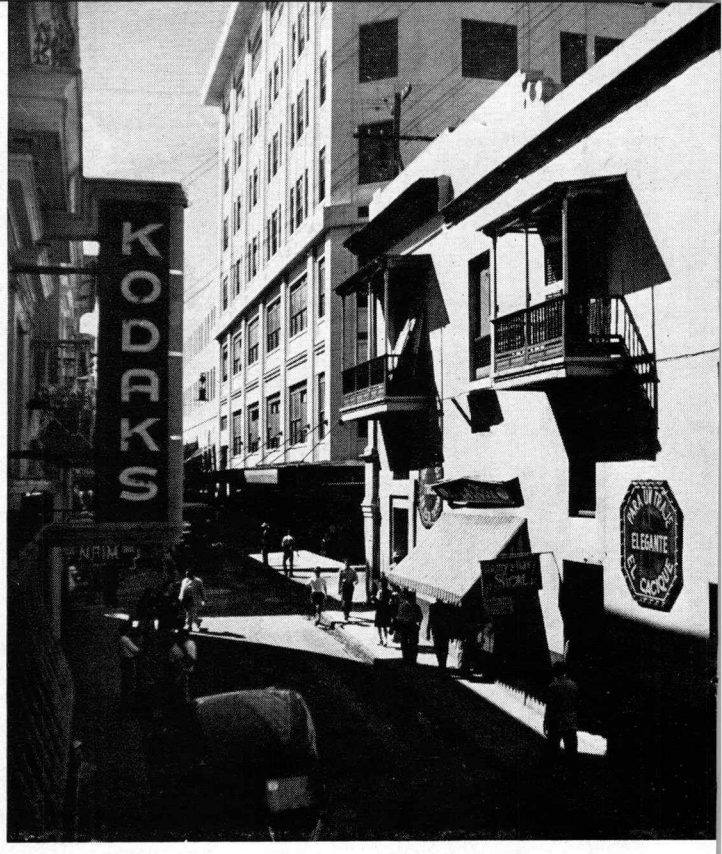
By continental standards, none of our cities would be counted as large. As a matter of fact, our most considerable urban concentration is on the continent: nearly 250,000 of us have our homes in New York City. After that come San Juan, the Insular capital, with a population of 215,000; Ponce, the "Pearl of the South," with 115,000; Río Piedras, the university city, with 91,500; Mayagüez, the "Sultana of the West," with 86,000; and Arecibo, "Villa of Captain Correa," with 77,000.

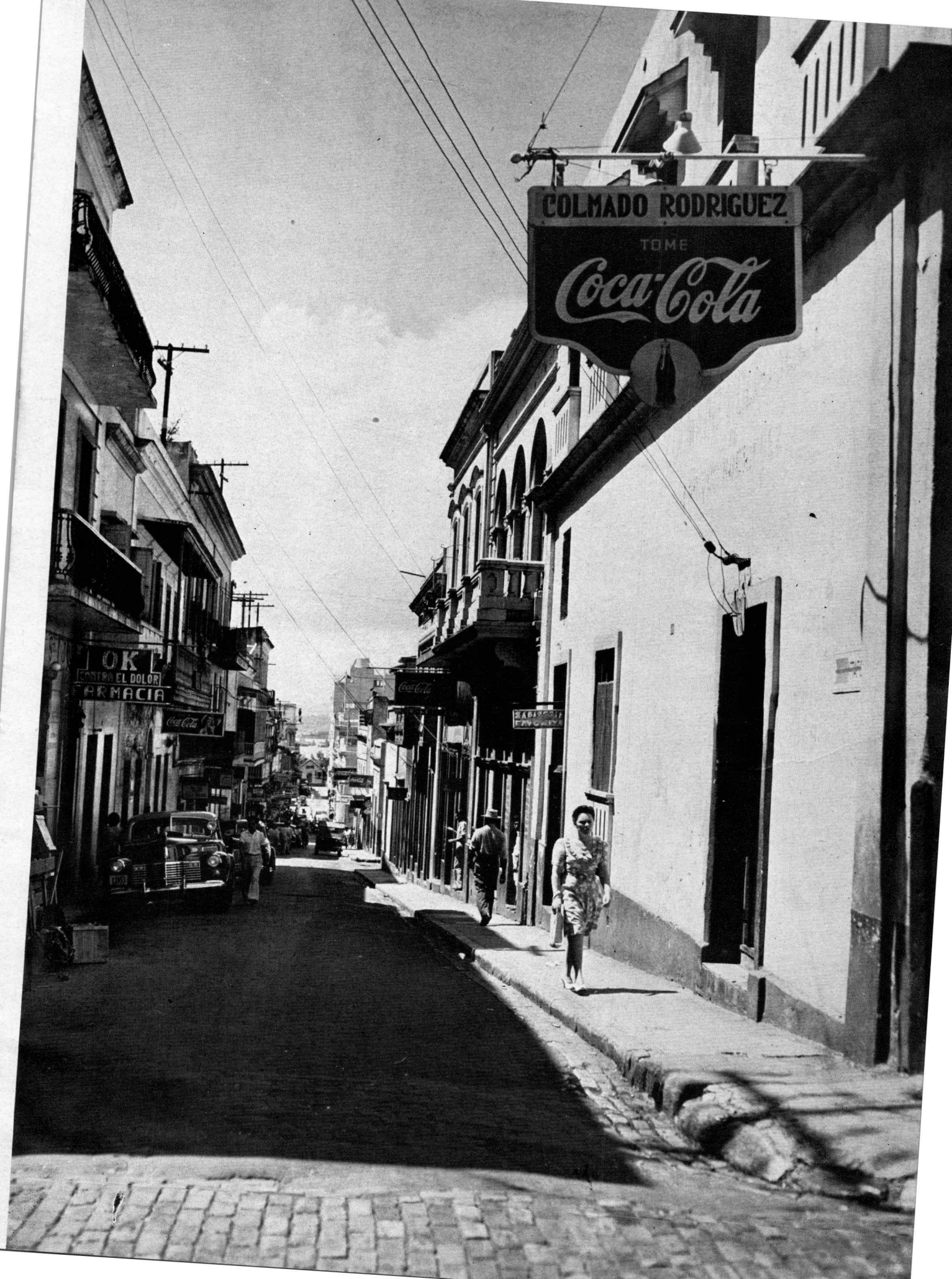
The contrasts often presented in cities of the United States by islands of foreign-speaking populations, are completely lacking in Puerto Rico; but in their place we have the color and

variety inherent in our cultural patterns. Reminiscent of Spain where the cobbler often plied his trade in the doorway of the noble, is the tendency of the rich and the poor to be next-door neighbors, especially in the more old-fashioned parts of the towns. We sometimes wonder if the modern idea of exclusive zoning is really more democratic.

In our cities too, street vendors exhibit their wares in the shadow of modern department stores. Our Puerto Rican Legislature meets in a modern marble capitol that would be at home in any one of the forty-eight states; and a Washington-appointed governor signs or vetoes their bills in his Spanish colonial palace, erected in the seventeenth century. A fortress three hundred years old, guards the entrance to San Juan harbor, lined with modern docks and an airport. Buses and trucks crowd narrow old streets under overhanging balconies; and old "stairway" streets branch off from modern thoroughfares. The old and the new, the rich and the poor, the Spanish and the American, touch elbows—sometimes jostle one another—in our cities.

BANK


KODAKS
ELEGANTE


COLMADO RODRIGUEZ
TOME
Coca-Cola
OK
CONTRA EL DOLOR
FARMACIA

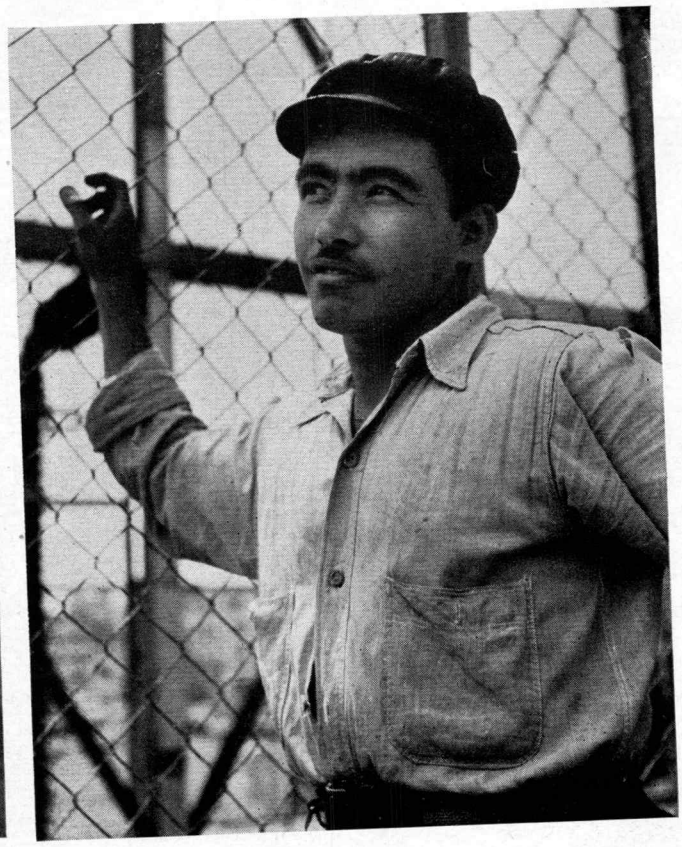
OUR OCCUPATIONS ARE VARIED

We are the wage earners in private enterprises. We man the docks, those umbilical centers at which the shipping lines pour the lifeblood into our Island from the placenta of the outside world. We are the crews of the trains and trucks and buses that form the circulatory system of the country itself. We are the bone and sinew of the few industries that help sustain our economy. And we are the laborers and artisans in the building trades that renew the worn-out cells.

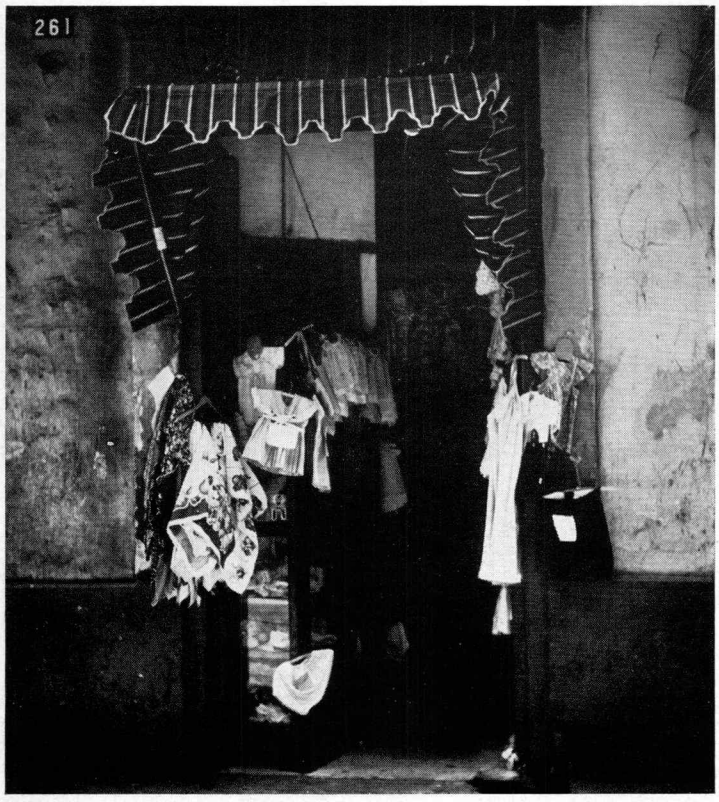
Many of us belong to unions, the C.G.T., organized along the lines of the C.I.O.; the Federación Libre, connected with the A.F. of L.; or independent groups. One thing that we greatly admire in the culture of the United States is the dignity of labor, the respect that the Continental worker has been able to command through group action, through individual worth, and through the social value of his services.

We who serve the people of Puerto Rico as government employees, also form a numerically important and qualitatively representative group among the city dwellers of the Island. We may be administrative officials, professional people, white-collar workers, skilled artisans, or unskilled laborers. For the government of Puerto Rico has traditionally participated in many fields of endeavor. Since Spanish times, our telegraphs have been operated by the state; and part of our telephone system was likewise set up by the government. Electric power plants were first established in Puerto Rico as municipal enterprises and are now Insular. The government undertook to supply bus service to some of the most congested areas during the war and still continues this service. And the government has supplied capital for much needed industries on which private investors were unwilling to take the initial risk.

Therefore we government employees make up a large and varied urban nucleus.

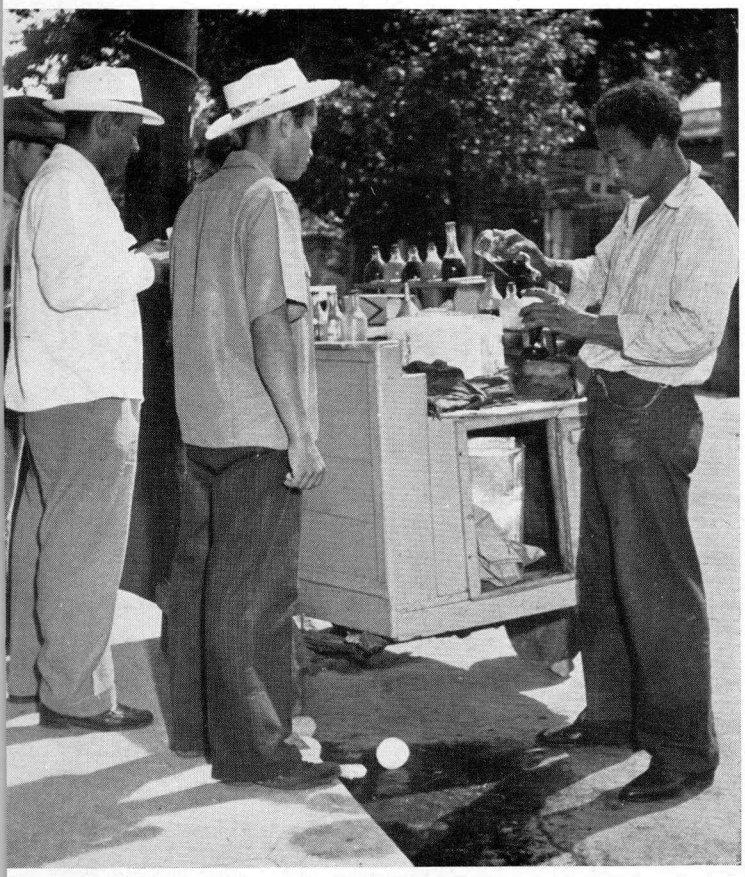


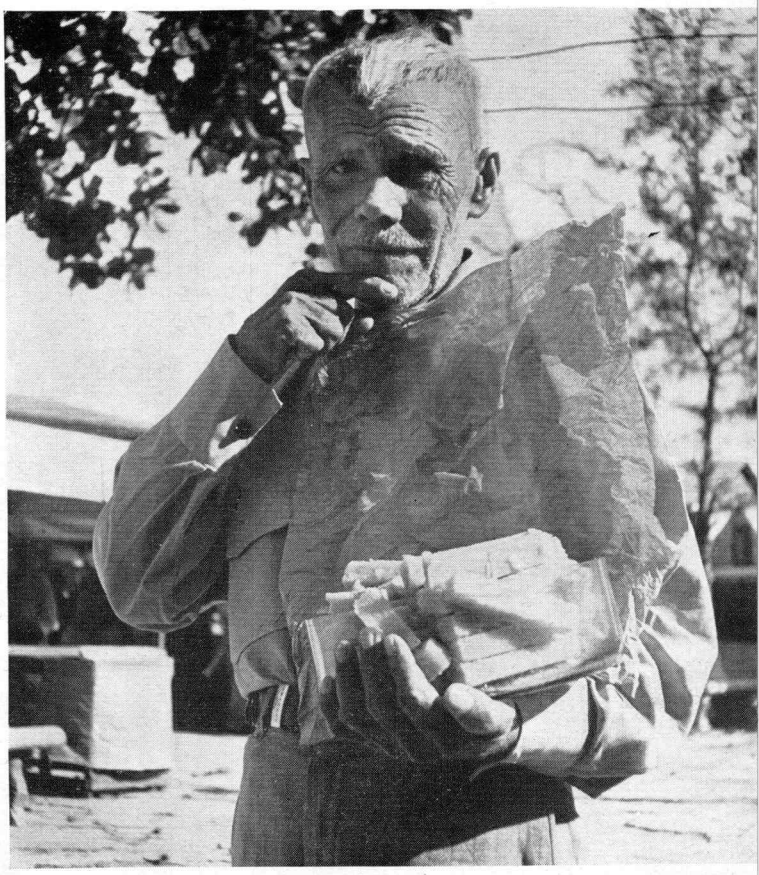
We are the independent business people of the cities, and we likewise constitute a considerable group in our communities. We own the large department stores and the small "bazars" supplied by a single sewing machine; we fill prescriptions and dispense patent medicines in our drugstores; we run the hotels and the coffee stalls; ours are the big shoe stores and the one-man cobbler shops; we import billions of machine-made American cigarettes and produce thousands of hand-made Puerto Rican cigars; we cut the hair of rich and poor in our barber shops; we manage modern grocery stores and haggle over the price of a head of cabbage at the tables in the municipal markets. We catch brilliant-hued tropical fish along the coast and supply diminutive oysters, clawless lobsters, and 300-pound sea turtles to the restaurant trade. We manufacture the mild white Puerto Rican cheeses and the pastes of guava, wild-orange peel, pineapple, or sweet potato with which these cheeses are often eaten. We are the independent business people—the butchers, the bakers, the candlestick makers—of Puerto Rico.

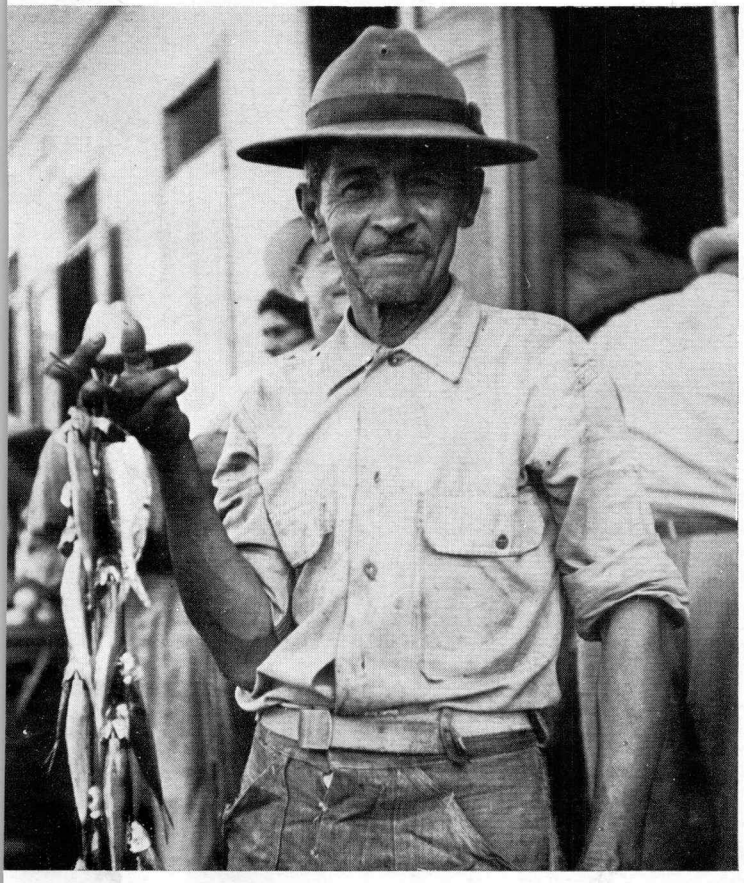


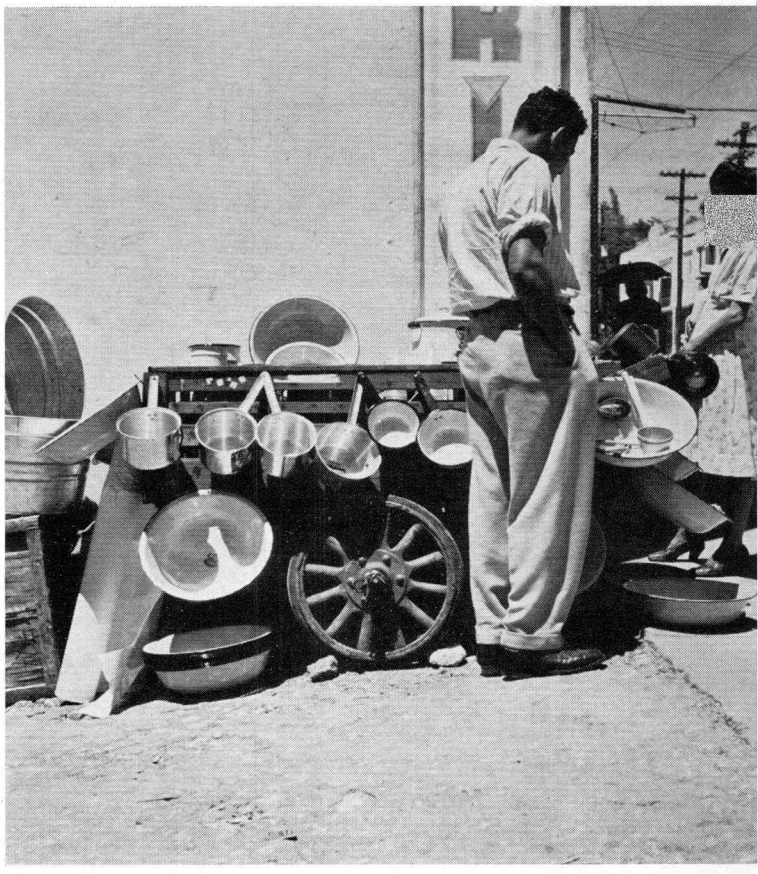
We also drive our public cars from one town of the Island to another. Inter-urban communication utilizes a narrow-gauge coastal railroad, an airplane line, buses, station wagons, and "públicos;" but the greatest of these are our "públicos." We and our satellites are vociferous in advertising our services. And if the passenger, after waiting for our car to fill with people, has to wait again for it to be filled with gas, oil, and water, he may grumble mildly; but we are not unduly concerned. We know that, as a good Puerto Rican traveller, he has made his plans with just such eventualities in mind. And we are loathe to disappoint our clients.

We too are the street vendors. With our baskets on our heads or our pushcarts before us, we hawk our fish, our fruit, and our vegetables about the town. We sell remnants of cloth from house to house in the poorer districts. We sell "snowballs" of shaved ice sweetened with colored sirup or dispense *guarapo,* the fragrant juice of the sugarcane. We peel off the outer skin of oranges in long, yellow curls, and puncture the top of the fruit so that our customers may suck the juice at their leisure. We lop off the tips of green coconut husks with our machetes to afford our clients a refreshing and sanitary drink. We offer to the schoolchildren our homemade confections of wild orange, coconut, or sweet potato. We anchor our pushcarts of household goods on a crowded corner and bargain in a leisurely way with the passing housewives.









The women of Puerto Rican cities, aside from their duties in the home, also take their part in the political, professional, and productive life of the country. The first Latin American woman legislator was a Puerto Rican. We have women judges, lawyers, doctors, and dentists. And in the school system, women are teachers, principals, district superintendents, Insular supervisors, university professors. They are clerks in the stores and stenographers in the offices.

In industry, women have not yet gone very far except as expert operatives in the needlework trades, tobacco stemming, basket making, and hat weaving. But then, industry in Puerto Rico has not itself gone very far except for the factory side of sugar and rum production.

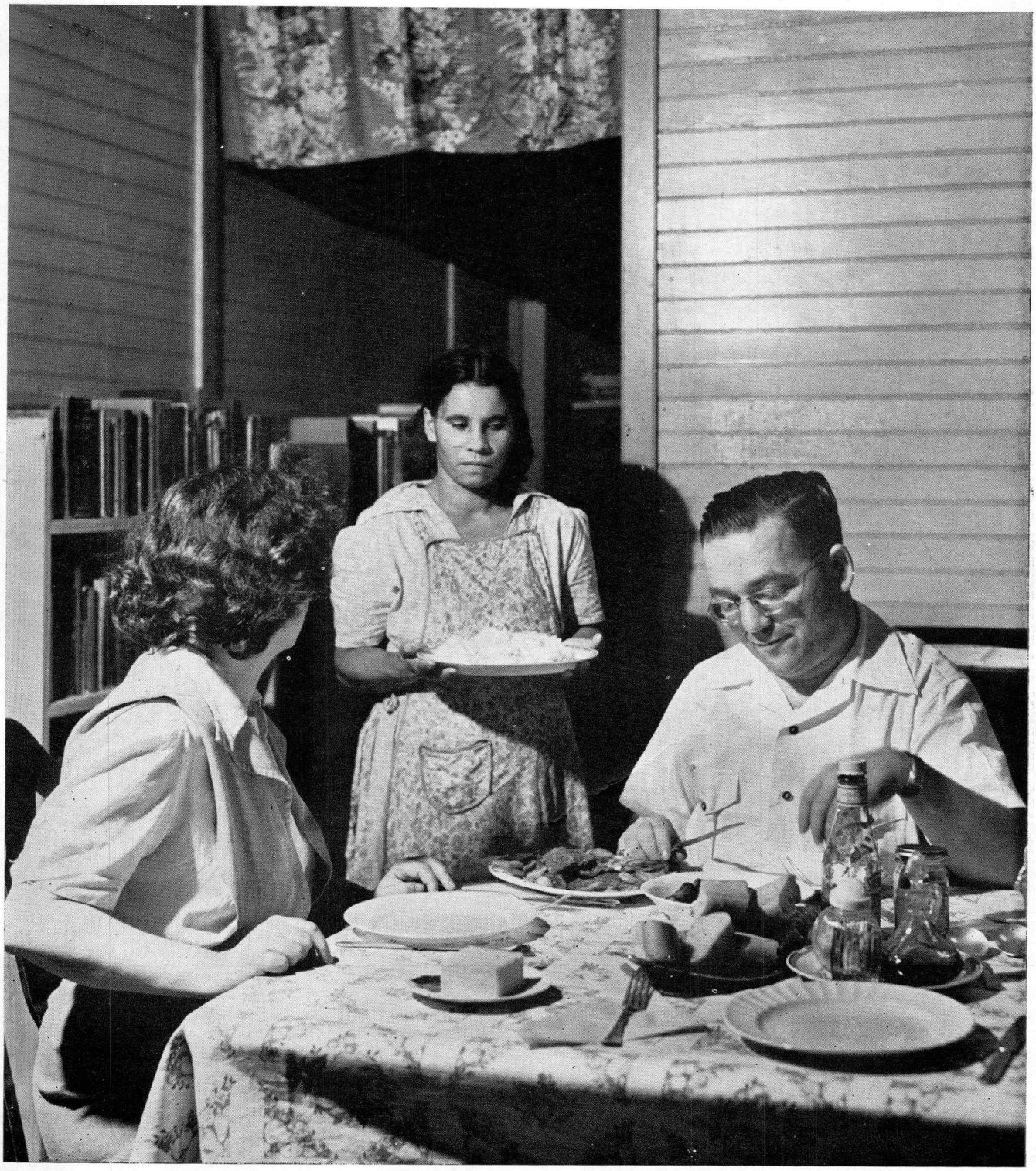
Women needleworkers, who produce goods to an export value of $24,591,000 a year, received as short a time ago as 1933, wages or piecework pay amounting to something like two cents an hour. At present, an adjustment of the Federal Minimum Wage Law to meet Puerto Rican conditions, guarantees them a minimum of twelve and a half cents per hour for their work.

Another means of livelihood for working women are the tobacco stemming plants, where a rapid worker can earn as much as two or three dollars a day.

After the tobacco has been cut, dried in the barns, and sweated, the leaf must be carefully stripped from the central vein. The women perform the triple task of stripping, sorting for quality, and tying into bundles that will later be put through a carefully controlled process of fermentation before the tobacco is ready for the fillers or wrappers of the aromatic Puerto Rican cigars preferred by Prime Minister Ernest Bevin of Great Britain.

Our women are active in the few native crafts that exist on the Island. They weave hats from palm straw, and baskets from various vines and fibers. Related to basketry is the making of table mats, trays, and bread baskets from palm leaves. *"Pellizas,"* originally used as saddle blankets or as substitutes for saddles, are made of old sugar sacks through which two-inch lengths of string are drawn to form a heavy nap. They are now sold as throw-rugs, either in their natural white or died in vivid reds, blues, greens, and yellows. Women also weave a rug from the dried fiber of the plantain stalk.

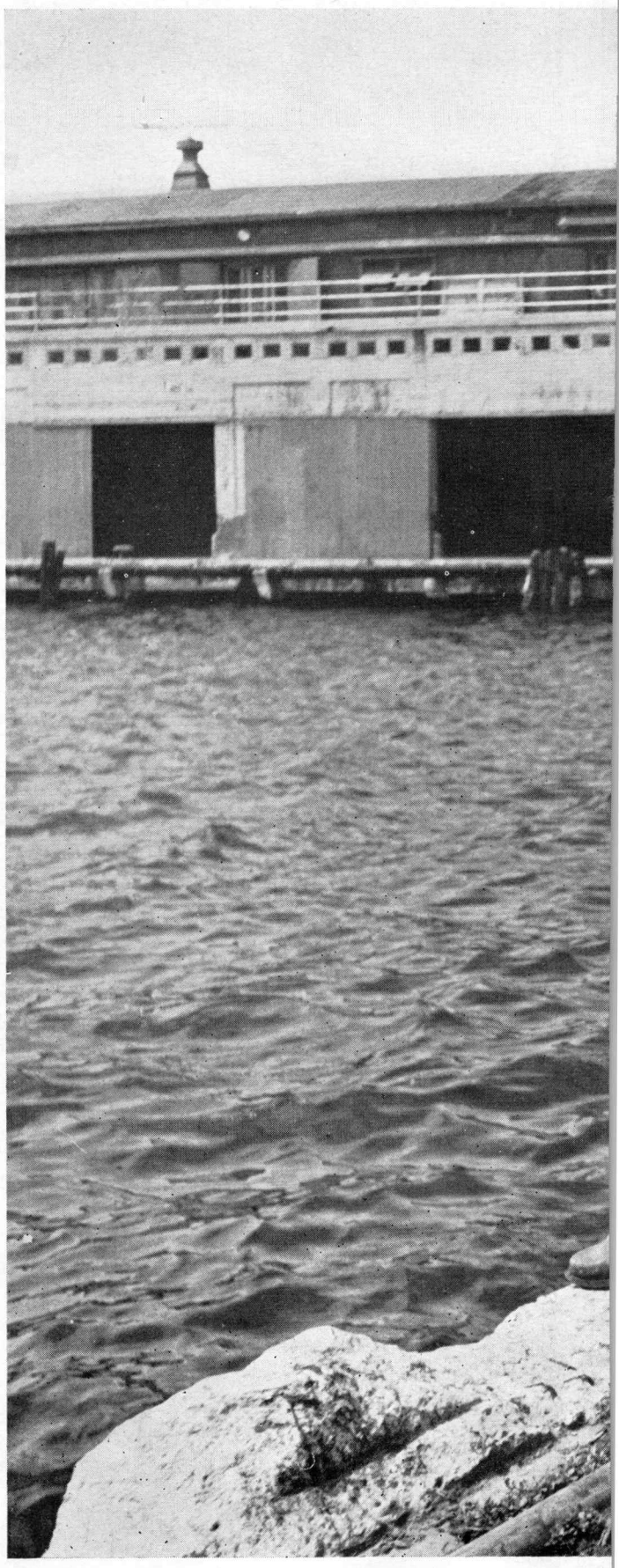
Women work as switchboard operators for both the government and private companies. They also work as telegraph operators, radio announcers, store clerks, stenographers, and secretaries. In all of these white-collar jobs, bilingualism is an important requirement.



A few years ago, a good cook, washwoman, or general servant was lucky to get from eight to twelve dollars a month and keep. Today, army dependency pay and unemployment insurance have temporarily relieved many of our poorer women from that particular type of slavery; and our women of the middle classes complain that they are now the ones who are in bondage to the kitchen sink. They daily grow more plaintive as the small remaining supply of domestic help gravitates towards the better salaries and higher adventure of the Continent.

Even our children are often wage earners. Newsboys hawk *El Mundo* and *El Imparcial* throughout the Island or sell *El Día* in Ponce. Other youngsters capitalize upon the sweet tooth of the public by vending candy and gum in the plazas and before the movie houses. And a shoeshine box is a pretty sure guarantee of a few coins at the end of the day. Ten cents is the ordinary asking price, though two-colored shoes command a quarter a shine; ordinary shoes may come down to a nickel in moments of dire economic stress; and an *Americano* may have to pay as high as fifteen cents as a penalty for having particularly enormous feet. Newsboys and shoeshine artists who frequent the plazas, often fill in their spare time by soliciting passengers for the public cars; and the innocent traveller who wants to go to San Lorenzo has to offer considerable sales resistance to prevent being taken to Cayey instead.

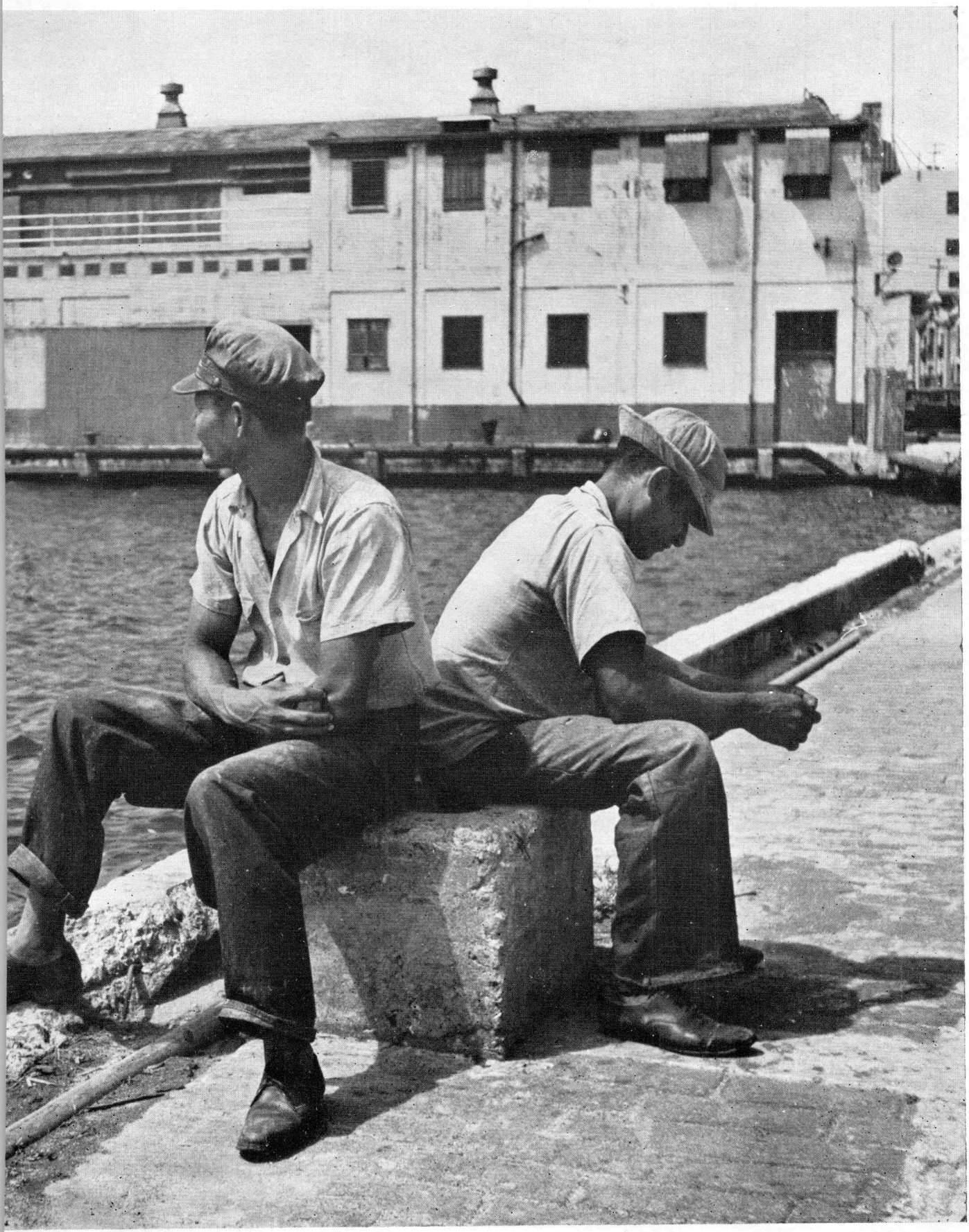
From soliciting passengers, to patching up blowouts, to driving a car when the owner is sick, to buying one's own public car on the installment plan, is the road to independence of many a former newsboy, who has had no Horatio Alger to sing his praises.

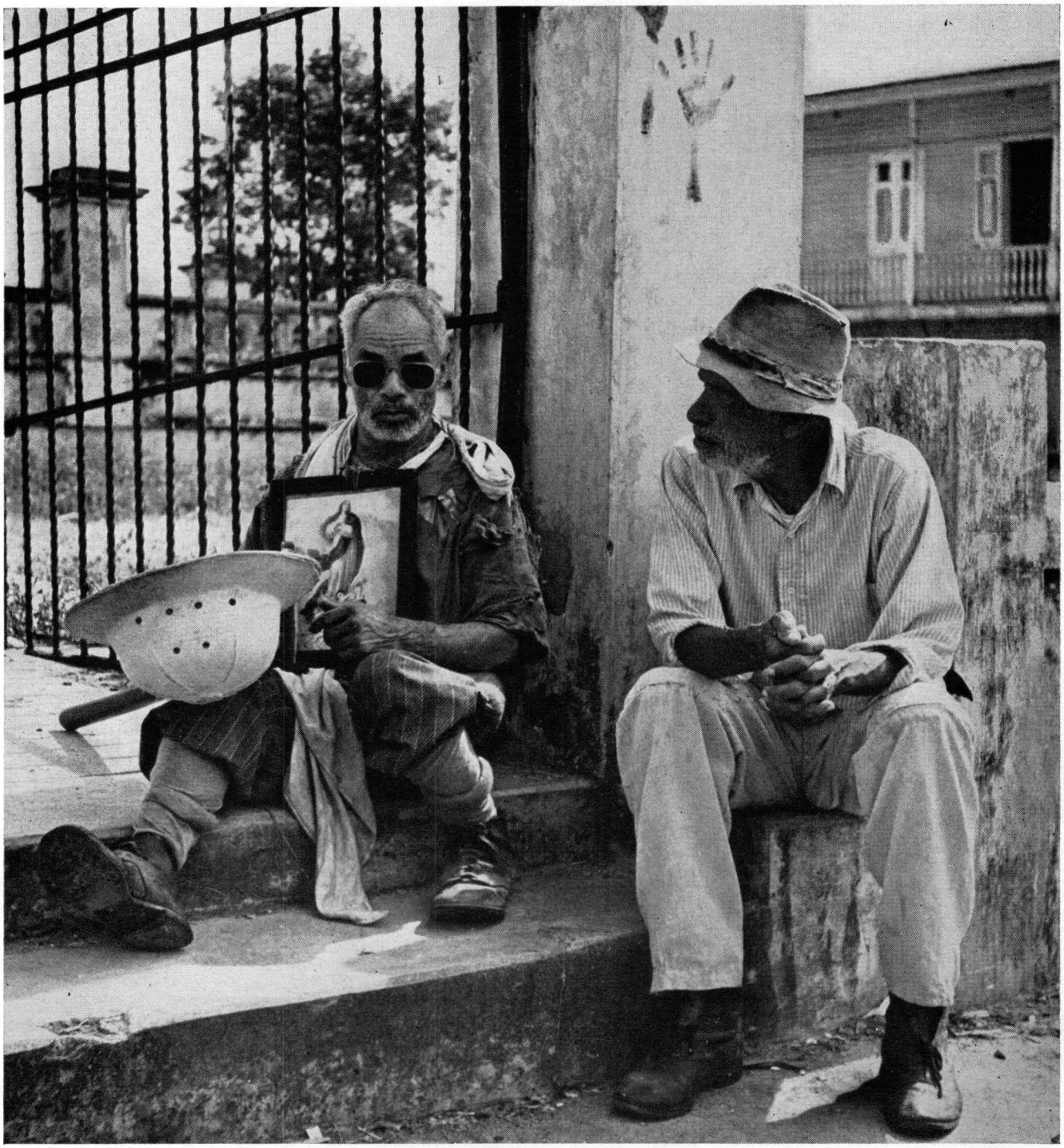


MANY OF US ARE UNEMPLOYED

For many of us, however, unemployment is either seasonal or chronic. In an agricultural island more densely populated than the industrial state of Massachusetts, where there are practically two people to every acre of tillable land, and where industrialization has been handicapped by dearth of raw materials, scarcity of capital, highness of freight rates, and lack of protection against outside dumping—there just aren't jobs enough to go around. The result is that in normal times, approximately one third of us can find no work.

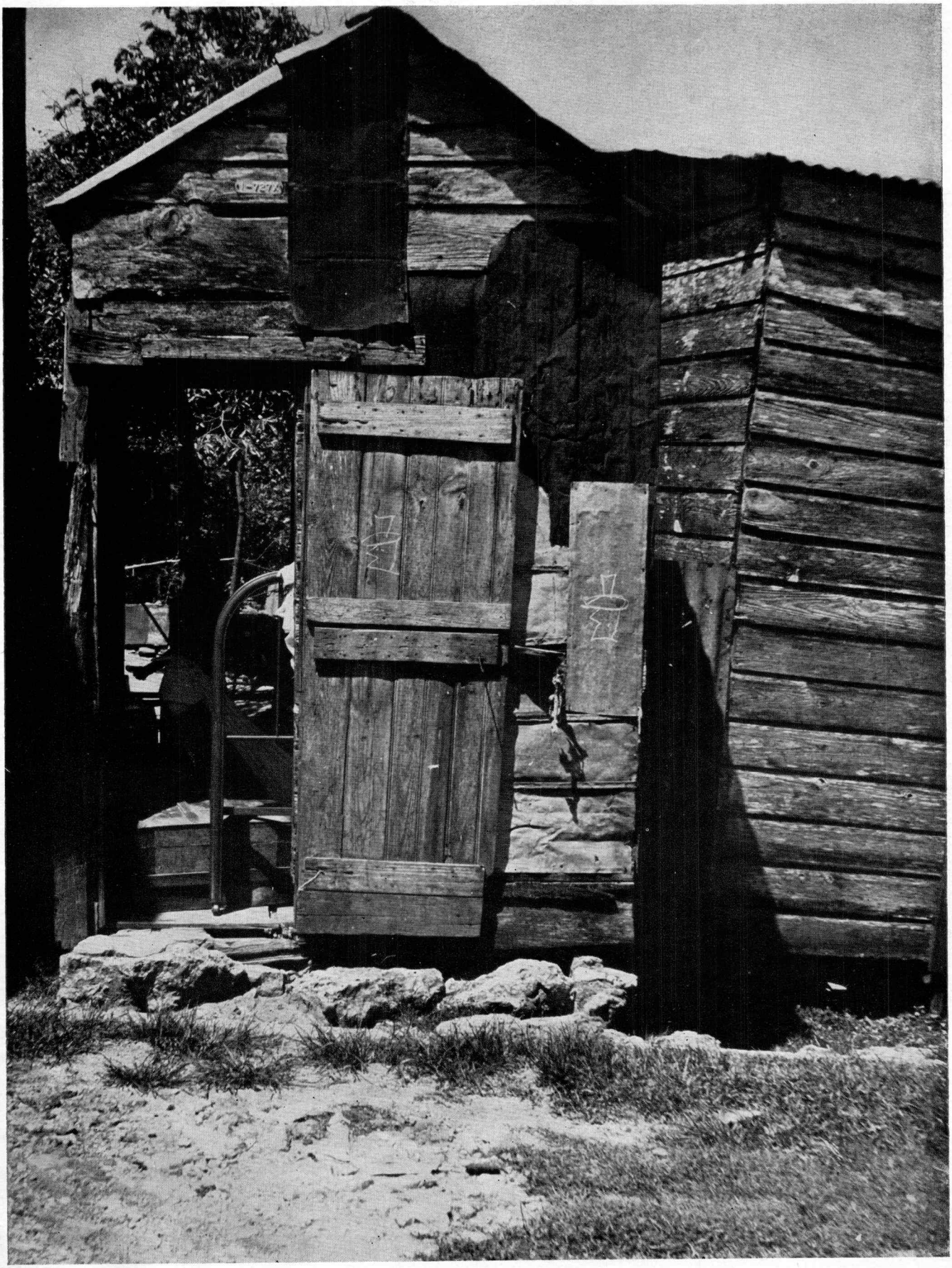
The closeknit Puerto Rican family takes care of many of us; and most people who enjoy a living wage or even less, are supporting at least one unemployed brother, son, sister, father, aunt, or god-child. Indeed, this willingness to look after our own, has been called "the Puerto Rican Social Security" by one of our most acute political thinkers. But when too many of the jobless are concentrated in one family group, or where the meager wages of the bread winner will barely keep his own numerous flock alive, then many of us are reduced to abject poverty.

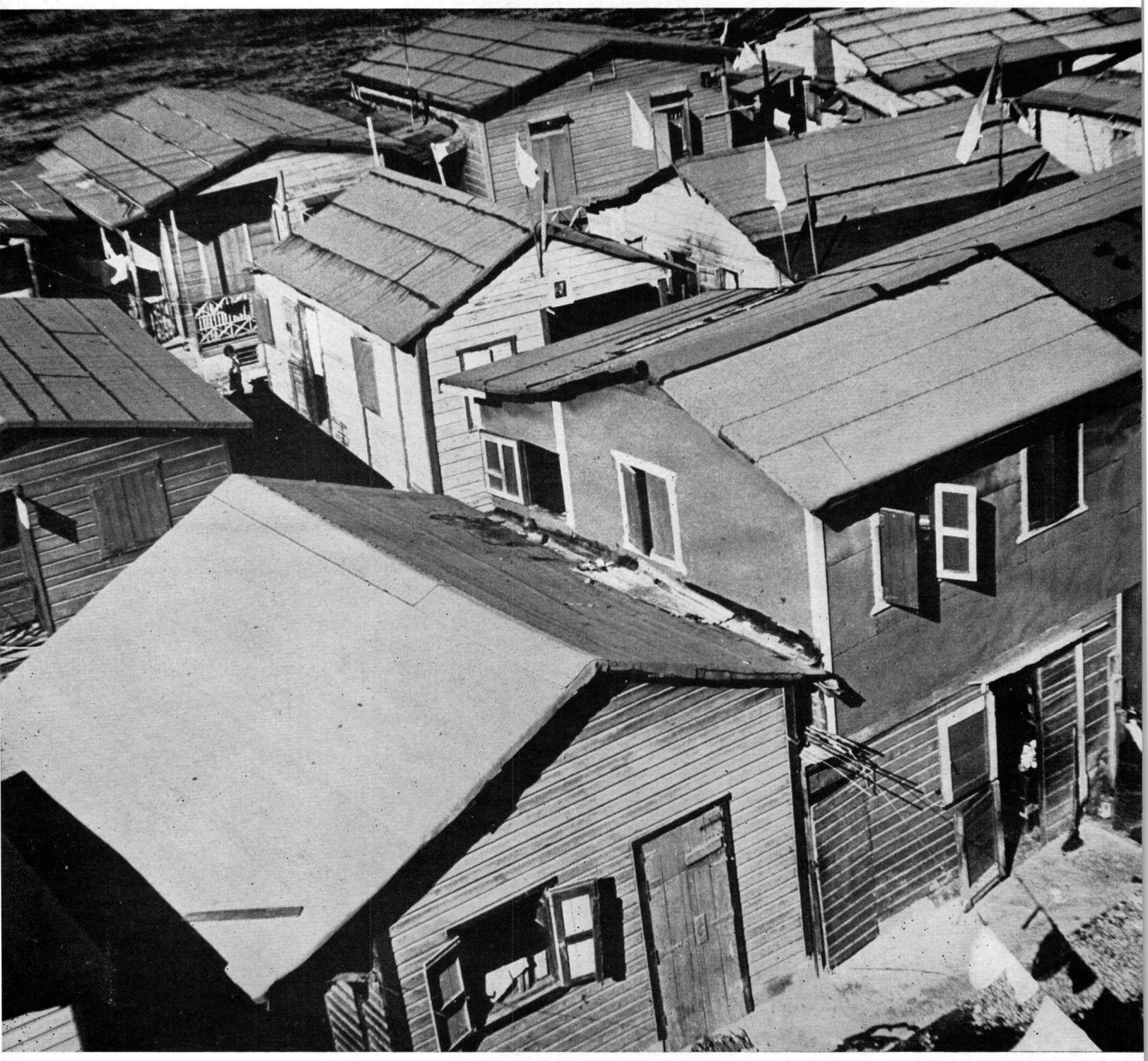




A government pittance of $7.50 per month prolongs the sufferings of a few of the most needy cases; but our government believes that it should employ most of its limited resources in attacking the underlying causes of poverty rather than in giving temporary treatment to its symptoms. Thus a few more of us are employed in public works programs that bring the farmers nearer to their markets through new or better roads; a few of us are encouraged to emigrate to jobs on the Continent; and a few of us are employed in the infant industries that the Development Company is encouraging.

But thousands of us still live an existence with but little commerce between hand and mouth, and a few of us are reduced to utter beggary.

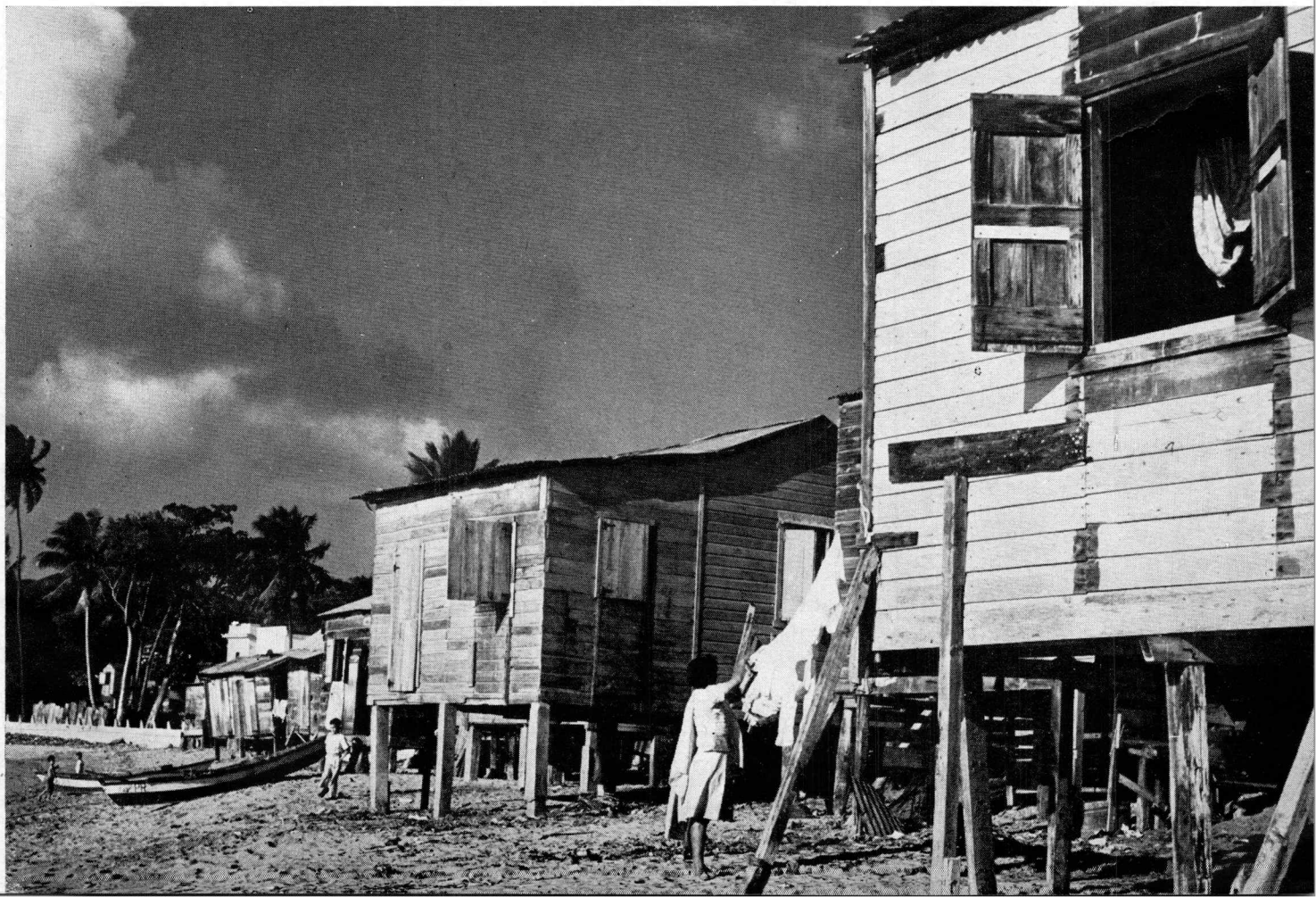




HERE WE LIVE

When we have reached the bottom of the economic ladder, we are forced to live in crowded tropical slums or ramshackle huts raised along the shores. There, rickety outhouses and open drains take the place of sewers; a community faucet is our water supply; muddy footpaths winding between tottering houses are our streets; and a few sticks of wood under a pot or a few lumps of charcoal in an old can, are our stoves.

But even in these conditions, our zest for life and our sense of humor stay with us to the last; and we laugh back at fate when we light-heartedly christen our districts The Millions (*Los Millones*), Little Old Mudhole (*El Fanguito*), Try-and-Get-Out (*Salsipuedes*), Sweet Lips (*Dulces Labios*), The Pearl (*La Perla*).

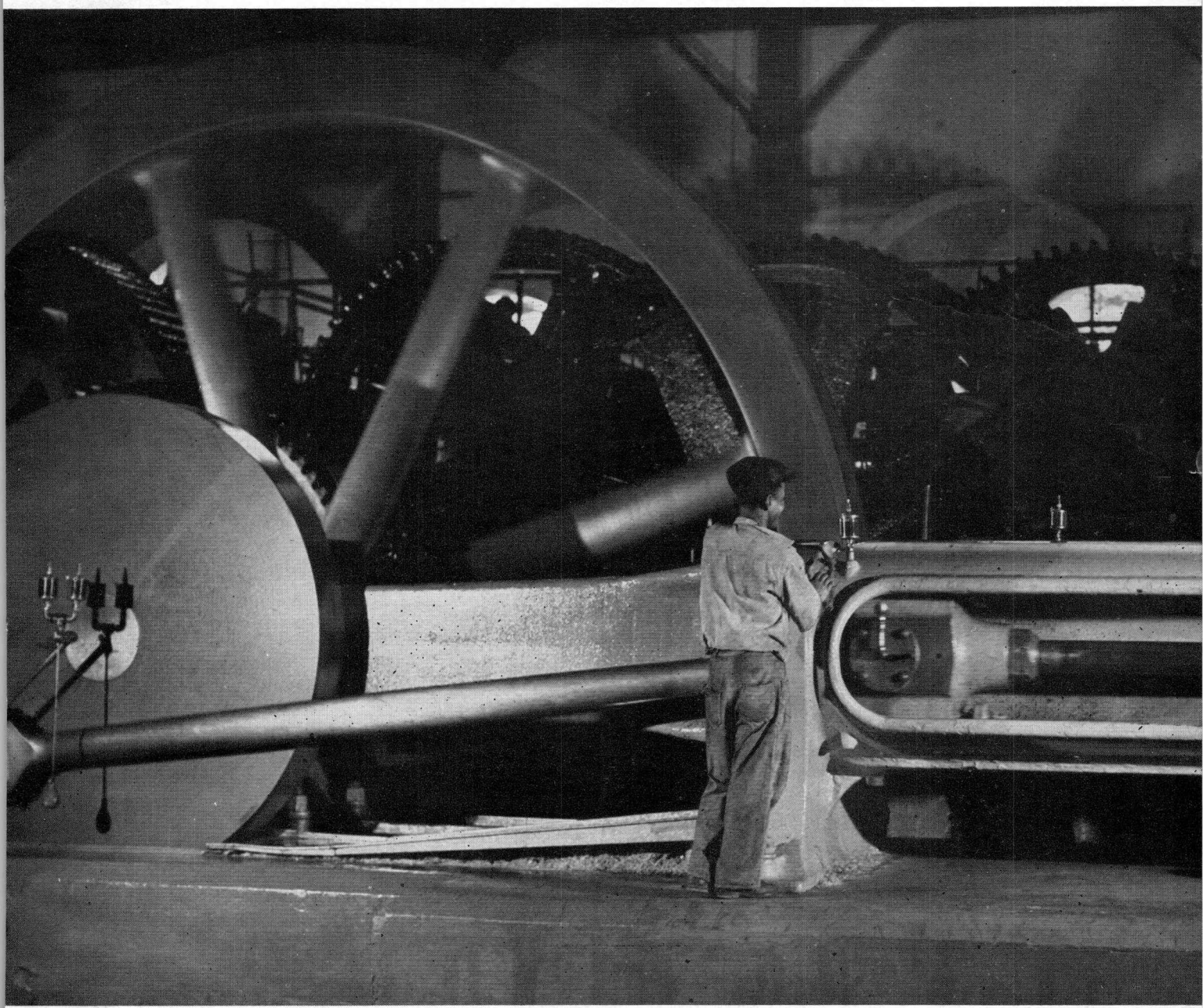


Even those of us who are able to earn a living wage, are likely to have small yards and to live in houses close to the street and to each other. This condition is partly due to the high cost of urban land, partly to our feeling that true neighborliness requires close proximity. This gregarious tradition has located the most desirable small-town dwellings around or near the plaza, the center of the drowsy life of the community. Less attractive to most of us are the quieter side streets where nothing much ever seems to happen.

In the larger cities, the workers' districts have developed a vitality of their own that is superior to that of many a small town. And the so-called middle-class sections of the larger urban centers are also likely to be self-contained units of considerable community life.

The few of us who can call ourselves wealthy are much like our peers in any other country. We live in beautiful villas with broad, cool balconies, well-turfed lawns, and patios filled with tropical blooms. We have our yachts and our country clubs, our exclusive casinos, and our annual trips to Europe or the States.

We are the owners of sugar and rum.



2021

WE MILL YOUR SUGAR

Sugar *centrales,* representing a capital investment of some $60,000,000, constitute, together with the rum distilleries, the only considerable industry of a highly mechanized nature in Puerto Rico. Sugar making is also one of our oldest industries; for cane was first introduced into the Island in 1515 from the plantations established in Santo Domingo by Columbus. But the modern production of sugar is a far cry from the crude methods of the early days. The primitive procedure, which lasted down into the nineteenth century, employed a horse or a yoke of oxen to run a mill consisting of two upright logs set close together. The long pieces of cane were fed between these, and the collected juice was boiled in large cast-iron kettles much after the style of maple sap in a New England sugar camp. The next step in the mechanization of sugar making was the establishment of the small steam-driven sugar mill, known as an *ingenio.*

The larger and much more complicated sugar mill of today is known as a *central,* precisely because it has centralized the production of sugar for large areas, sometimes extending as far as thirty or forty miles in each direction. The machinery and chemical processes of the *central* are likewise much more complicated than those of their predecessors.

When the cane reaches the mill in trucks or cars, it is first put through a series of revolving knives that cut it into small bits. A moving belt next takes it to a series of huge iron rollers. During the crushing, diluted juice from previously milled cane is added to make extraction more effective; and before it reaches the last rollers, hot water is also poured into the fibrous mass. The result is that about 95% of the juice is finally squeezed from the cane.

The apparently useless pulp or *bagazo* that remains, ordinarily serves as fuel for the *central*.

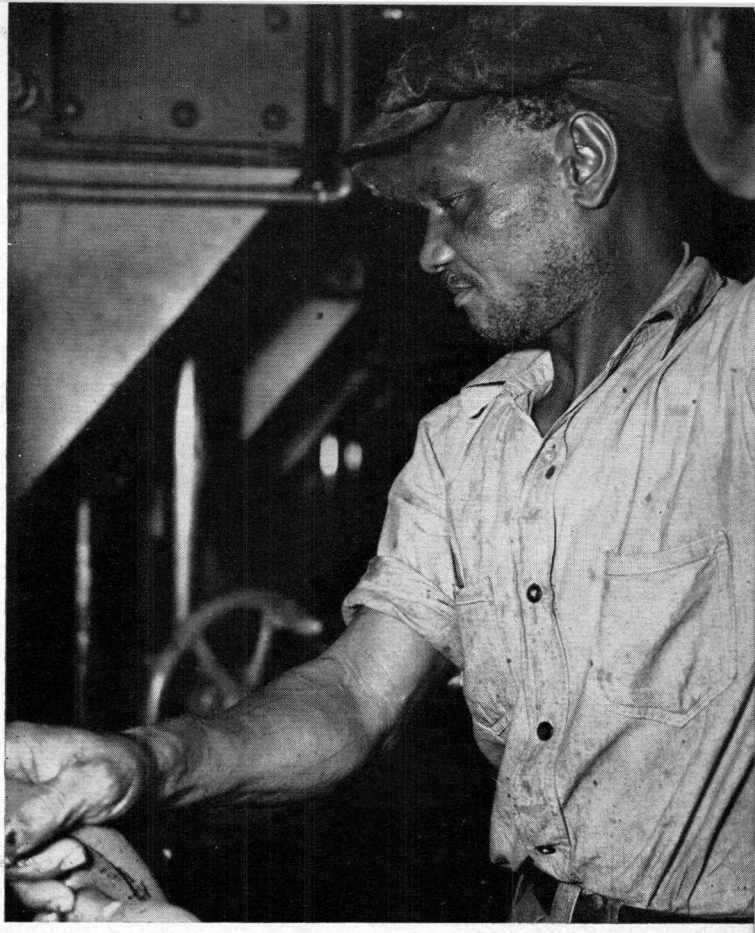
With the proper plant, it may also be used as the basis for the manufacture of fiber board.

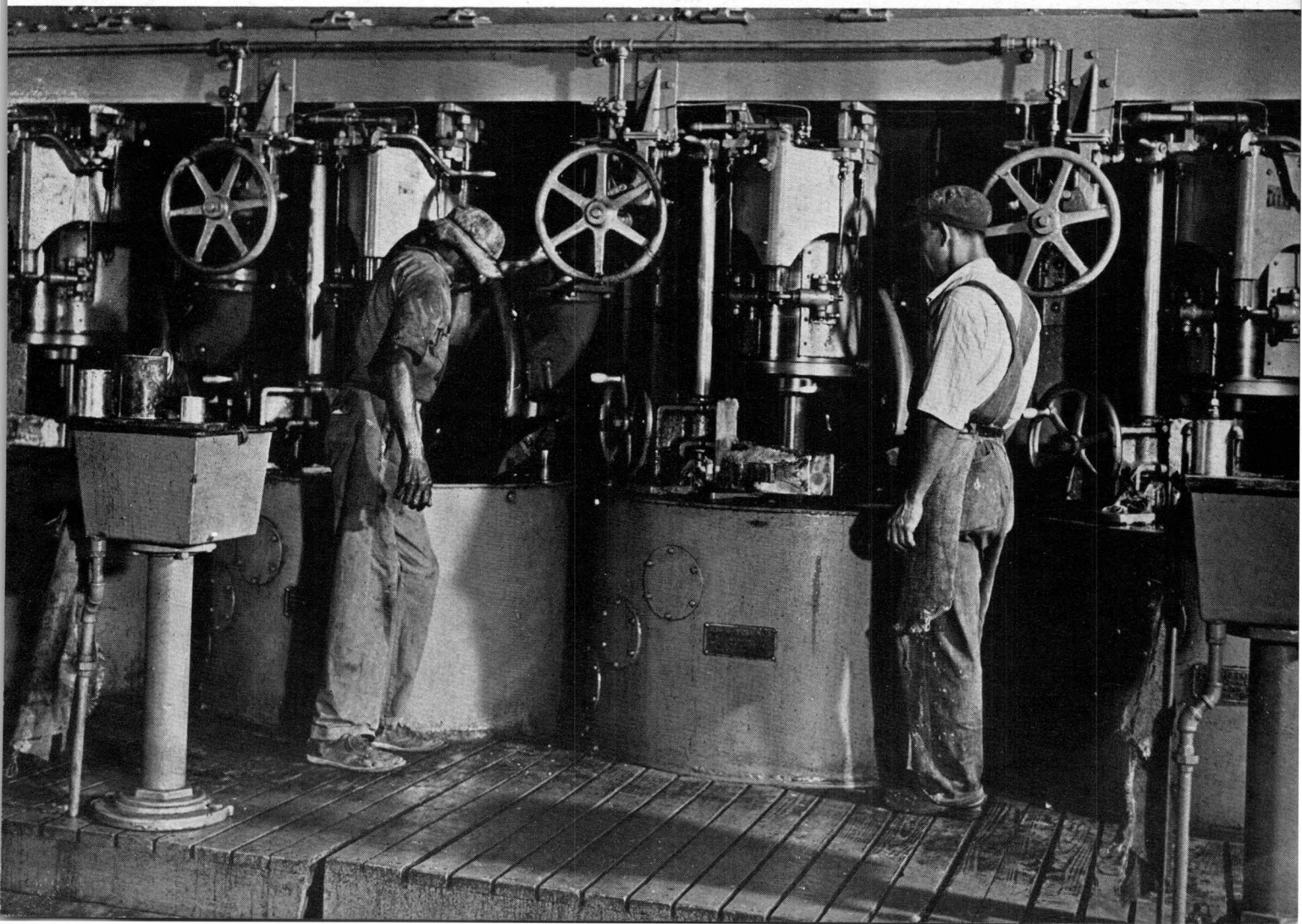
The cane juice or *guarapo* that is strained off, is treated with milk of lime and heated in order to rid it of impurities. These are removed from the boiling juice by a vacuum filter and a series of settling tanks, and the resulting black mud is thrown back on the land as fertilizer.

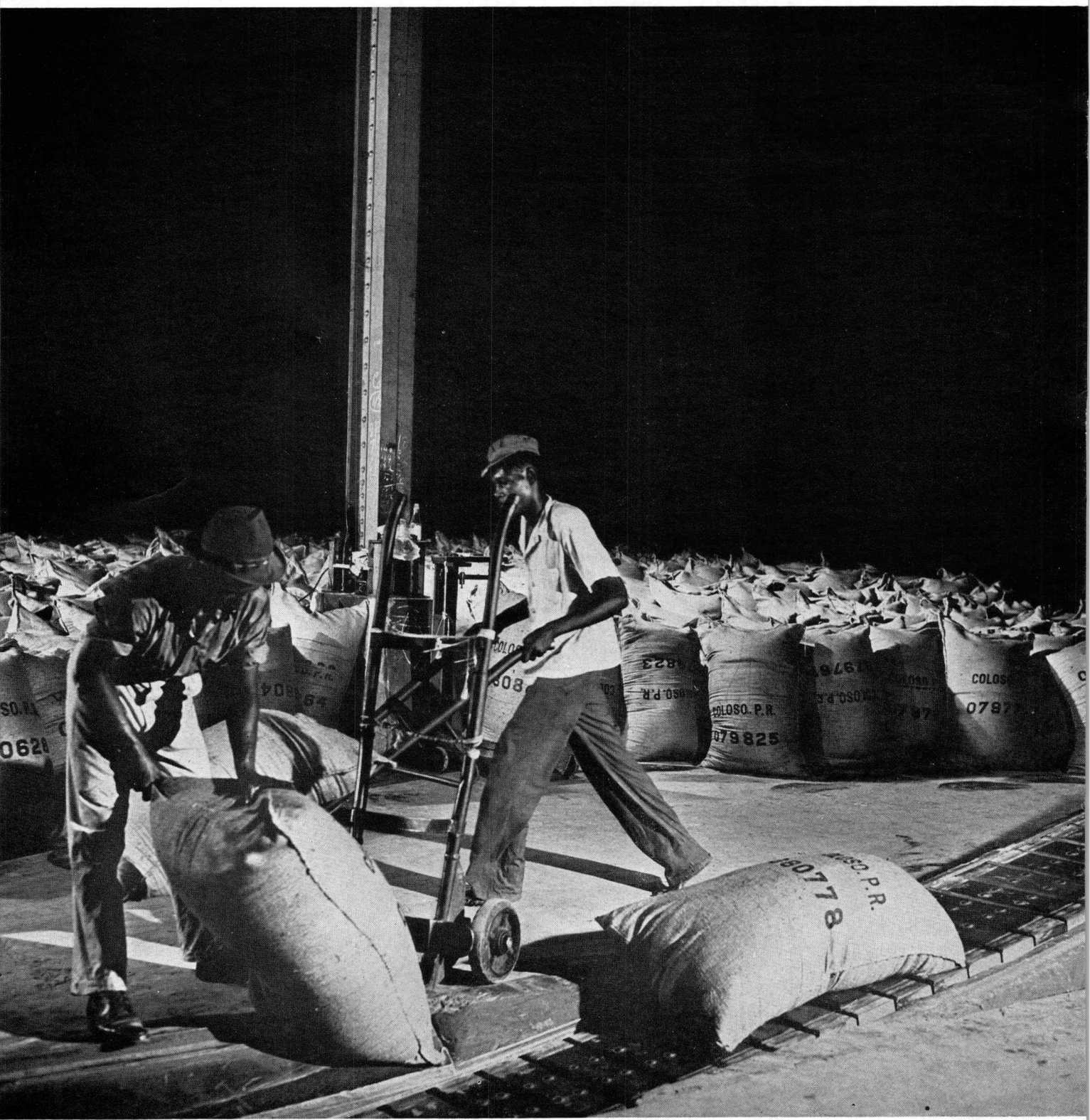
The clarified juice is next heated in a series of huge vacuum tanks. In each succeeding tank, more of the water content is evaporated until pure sugar syrup is produced.

Another series of vacuum tanks boils the syrup until sugar crystals form in it. Then a centrifugal machine, which makes 3000 revolutions per minute, draws off the molasses and leaves the raw sugar. This is then directed to weighing machines, which fill the sacks, and these are finally sewed up by still another machine.

The molasses is processed three times before it is finally released for cattle feeding, cookery, or the making of rum and industrial alcohol.

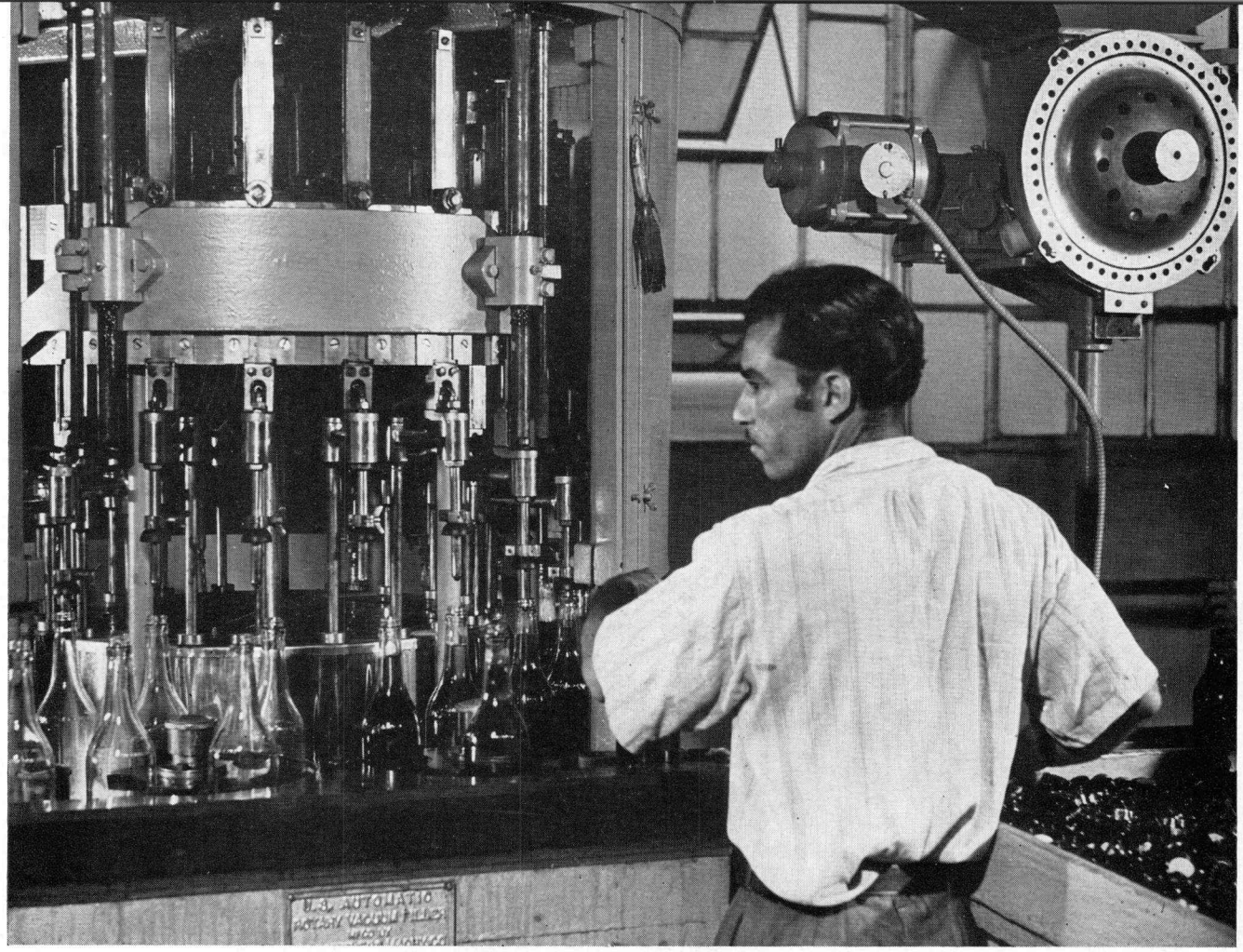


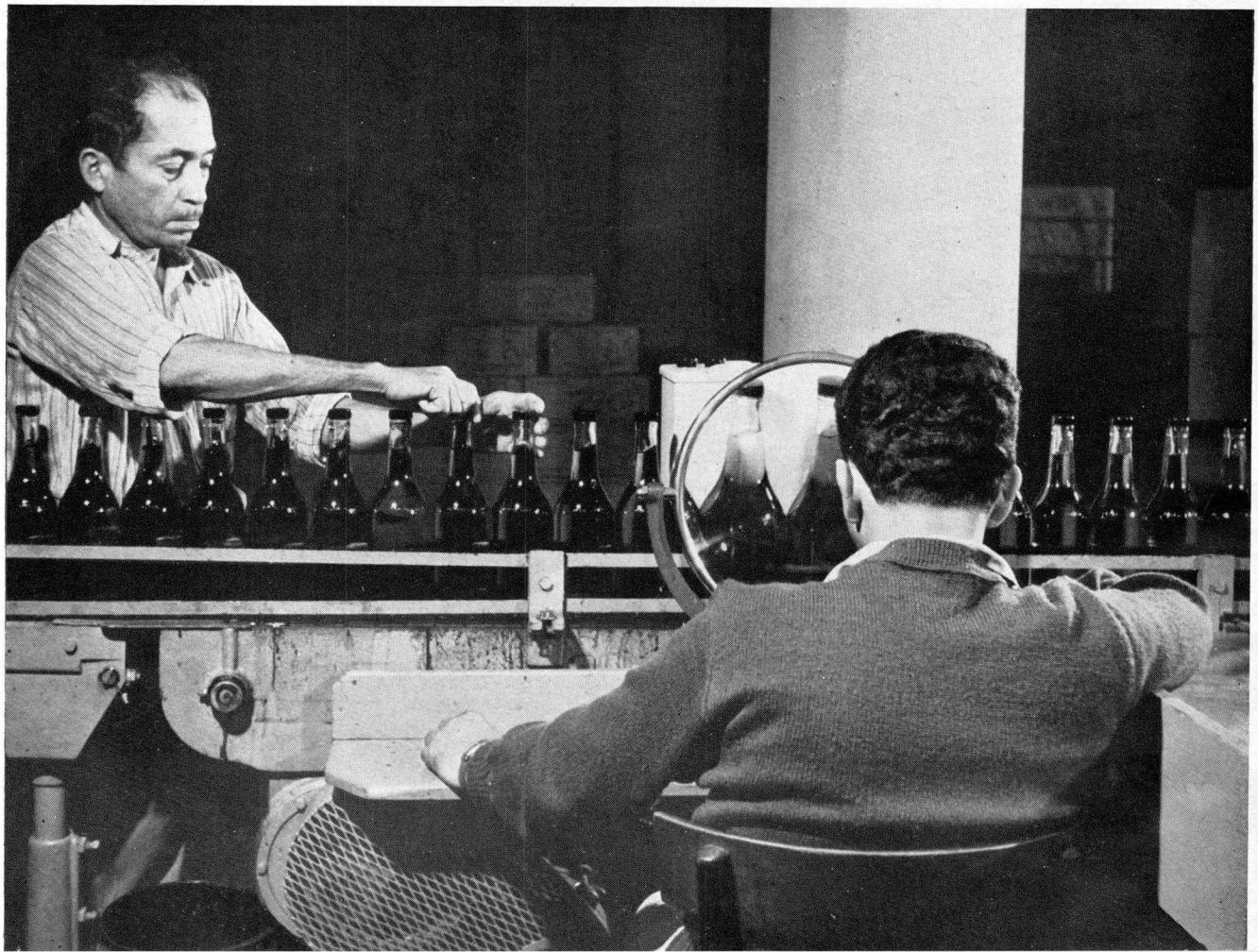




The sugar, as produced by the *central,* is raw or brown sugar. Though our poorer people use it because of its relative cheapness, and though nutrition experts recommend it because of its mineral content, the market in general prefers white sugar. Five refineries on the Island take care of a part of our product, and the rest of it is sent to plants in the continental United States.

CAPE CANAVERAL





WE DISTILL YOUR RUM

The distilling of rum, like the making of sugar, has a long tradition behind it in Puerto Rico. All qualities of rum are produced on the Island, from the raw *cañita* or *pitorro* of the mountain moonshiner to the cherished tipple of the connoisseur, which has been carefully aged in Spanish sherry casks. Our typical product is a light-bodied drink with a delicate aroma reminiscent of canefields under a tropic sun.

Rum is produced as a byproduct of the sugar industry. The molasses is diluted, fermented, and distilled. It is then reduced to 86 proof (43% alcohol) and aged over a period that varies with the quality desired. One of the most advertised brands is sold after it is four years old.

The United States returns to the Treasury of Puerto Rico all internal revenues collected on rum shipped to the Continent. During periods when the use of grains for spirits was restricted, this income amounted to over $50,000,000 a year. Rum distillers also hope that the demand for their product will become more widespread because of the emergency rum drinking that Continentals have recently done.

EDUCATION MEETS DIFFICULTIES

Education has reached a higher level of efficiency in our towns and cities than in our rural districts. The present organization provides six years of elementary school, three of junior high, three of senior high. Of every 100 children who enter the first grade, however, only 68 graduate from the sixth. And many of our children never find accommodation in the overcrowded elementary schools, where most who do attend, are limited to half-day sessions.

Another unsolved problem is the scarcity of textbooks. A recent survey showed that our third-grade children, for example, have access to four books, whereas accepted standards for that grade are eight books for class study, six for outside reading. This situation is aggravated by the fact that the four books available have to serve for instruction in two languages.

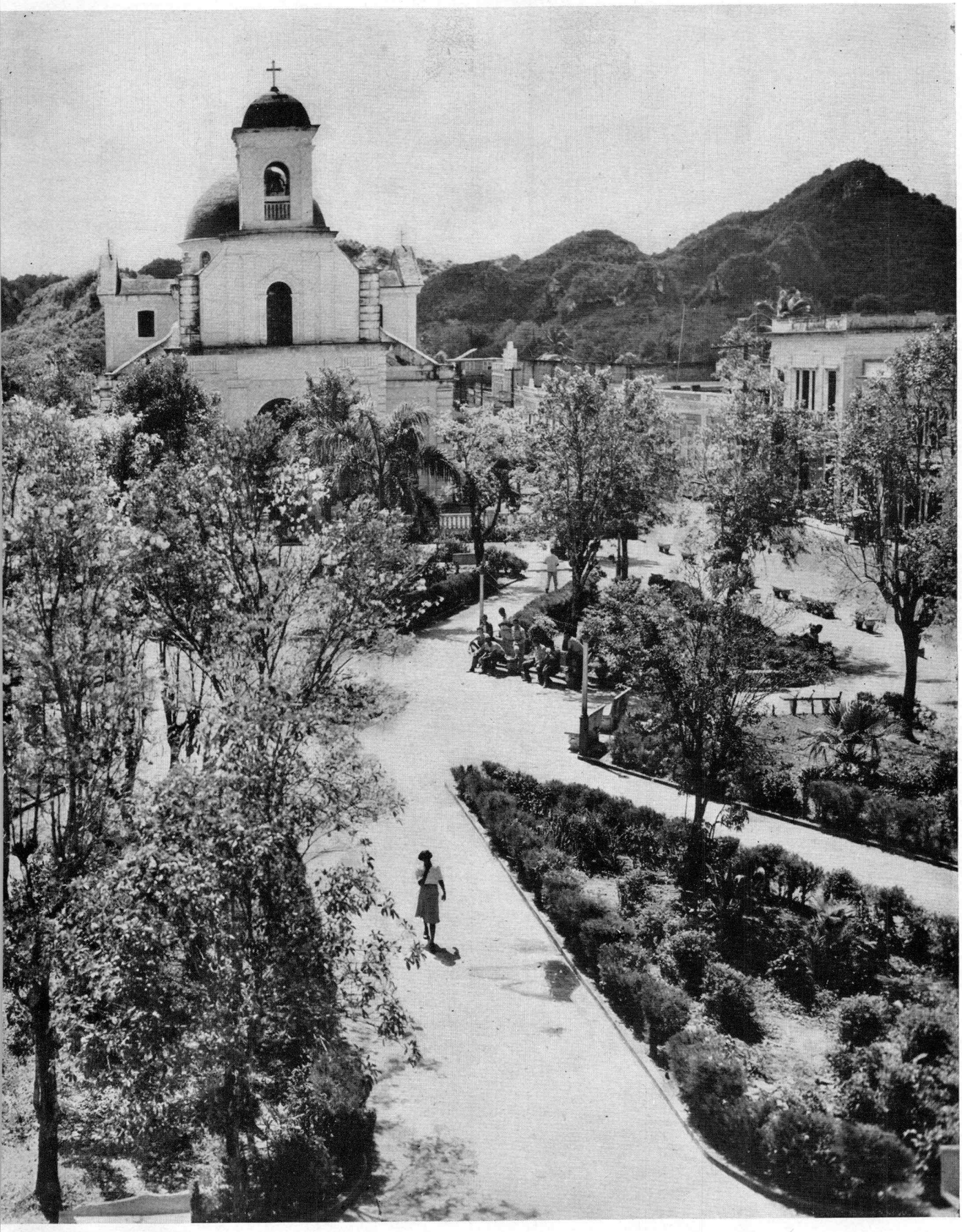
These problems exist despite the fact that our Legislature is traditionally generous to the schools. The dilemma arises from the fact that we are trying to provide education for a constantly increasing population, of which 34% of the members in the urban zone and 43.5% in the rural zone are under 15 years of age. Furthermore, the wealth of the country that faces this crisis, may be measured by the fact that the annual incomes of 85% of our families are under $350.

Under these circumstances it behooves us to make our schools as efficient as possible—every penny must count. Favorable to this purpose is the organization of our entire school system under one central Department of Education. The quality of our teaching staff is also on the credit side of the sheet. Since 1931-32, minimum requirements have been a normal diploma for elementary urban teachers, a bachelor's degree for high school teachers. To be sure, recent war conditions and rapid expansion to meet growing enrollment, have necessitated provisional appointments of some teachers who as yet lack this preparation. But this group is being brought up to standard as rapidly as possible by means of university extension and summer courses.

The professional spirit of our teachers is evidenced by their Puerto Rico Teachers' Association, to which most of them belong, thus forming the most compact group of its kind in the Americas. This Association has obtained from our Legislature a tenure law, a twelve-month contract, a pension law, and a modern salary scale. It publishes a professional journal, offers medical and hospital service, and provides insurance for its members.

In spite of our centralized educational system and the quality of our teachers, however, the efficiency of our schools is seriously impaired by the attempt to teach *in English,* a practice comparable to expecting a youngster in Missouri to learn his arithmetic and geography in French. We all recognize that the teaching *of* English is a necessity—Puerto Rico must be able to communicate effectively with the United States. The original theory was that teaching other subjects in English would reinforce the teaching of English itself. Experience has taught us, however, that the opposite is true. In the first place, if *all* teachers have to teach English, we cannot select the best equipped for that purpose; and everybody knows the comparative scarcity of good foreign-language teachers. Furthermore, even the teacher who masters English, has little time to correct language errors in a history or algebra class. As a result of these facts, the average child may suffer from the poor example of his teacher's English or the constant repetition of his classmates' errors—or both—and *bad* practice makes *im*perfect. The English teacher, instead of being able to devote all her time to teaching English, must spend much of it in *un*-teaching the patois acquired in the other classes. Add to all this the emotional attitude towards English produced by the use of this language in the other subjects. The most elementary psychology acknowledges that an obstacle to learning becomes an object of aversion. Now English is a serious obstacle to the learning processes of our children. Seventh-graders read with great difficulty a *fifth* reader in the English class. But in the other classes, they are confronted with the task of reading seventh-grade material. The resulting frustration produces a negative attitude towards English and thus creates one more problem for the English teacher.

Teaching other subjects in English is, then, wasteful as far as English instruction is con-



Above all, the public plaza, of an evening, is a buzz of social—and therefore conversational—activity. Those of the younger generation who are fortunate enough to have officially recognized sweethearts, pair off in their circuits around the plaza, and what they talk about is nobody else's business. The unattached girls circle around together and make wild guesses as to what this nobody else's business can be. And the stags either parade in the opposite direction or stand on the sidelines to ogle the disdainful señoritas and make exhaustive inventories of their charms. Meanwhile, the oldsters occupy the plaza benches, keep a weather eye upon the inflammable material about them, and settle the problems of the universe in grave discourse.

The celebration of the patron saint's day (each town has its special patron) brings even greater crowds to the plaza to hear the music, try their hands at the wheels of fortune, and, above all, to see and talk to one another. Then the youngsters who have not yet reached the age of manly *dignidad,* will perch like rooks in the branches of the trees to get a good view of the fireworks.

Other favorite gathering places are certain restaurants in the larger cities. After eating hours, these establishments would seem to cater rather to the needs of the spirit than to those of the flesh. They take on almost the aspect of social clubs, and *tertulias* or conversation groups gradually appear at the various tables. There, in the corner, a poet, a politician, and a doctor foregather night after night over their demitasses of black coffee, to discuss the many interests that they have in common; and across the room will be a couple of young lawyers arguing their cases with a civil engineer and a schoolteacher.

Social life in Puerto Rico is sociable.

The movies have long been one of our favorite diversions. In the old days of the silent films, the mere substitution of Spanish captions for English ones solved the language problem. With the advent of the talkies, Spanish sub-titles were still necessary. To meet the growing competition of Mexican and South American films, one Hollywood company has experimented with dubbing Spanish dialog on pictures originally filmed in English; but this innovation has not been an unqualified success. Most of us like George Brent, Greer Garson, Bette Davis, and Charles Laughton better when they do their own talking.

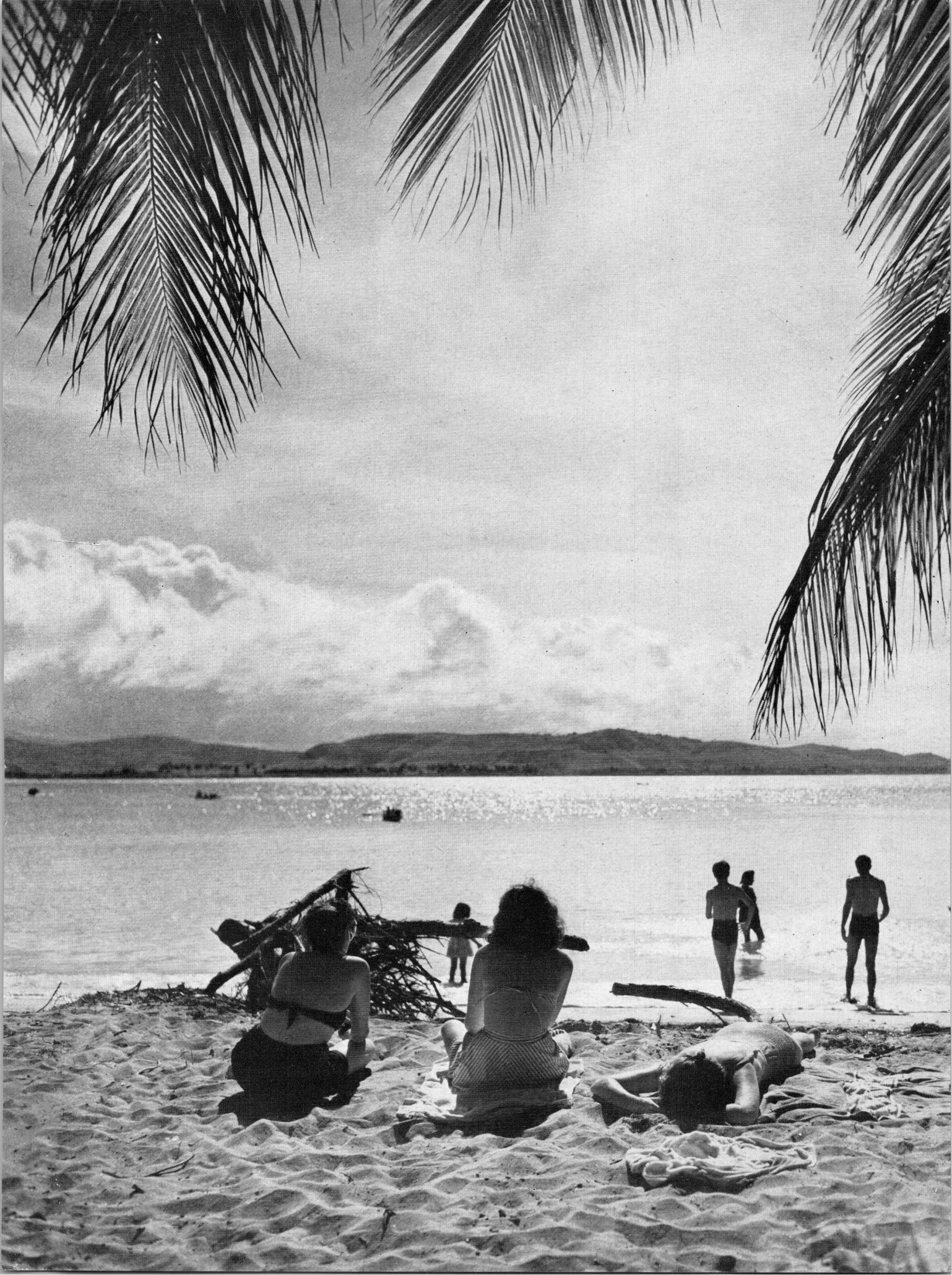
Puerto Rico is also acutely sports conscious. In baseball we have even adopted the Continental tradition of staging games between the police and the penitentiary; and we have six professional teams on the Island, which have contributed players like Hiram Bithorn and Rodríguez Olmo to the big leagues in the United States. Basket ball is a favorite amateur sport. The participation of the Armed Forces has recently given an added prestige to this game; and a basketball team from the University of Puerto Rico recently made a tour of Central America and the United States.

Boxing is another great sport that has gained considerable popularity, especially in San Juan. Pedro Montañez and Sixto Escobar have represented the Island in prize rings on the Continent.

Cockfighting has a long tradition in Puerto Rico. Though it has lost the savor of illegality that it once enjoyed, numerous cockpits still function throughout the Island. We do not use the steel spurs common elsewhere, but fight our birds with their natural spurs sharpened to a needle's point.

Horse races are held once a week and on holidays in the San Juan hippodromes, and fans all over the Island bet on the results.

Puerto Rico has many beautiful beaches, of which we take full advantage. In a few of the smaller towns, however, swimming is still almost too formal an affair to be called a sport. It may be indulged in only during a certain season; and a lady will inform you solemnly that she has decided to "take the baths" this year, as though she had resolved upon a series of antityphoid injections or a course of lectures on metaphysics.

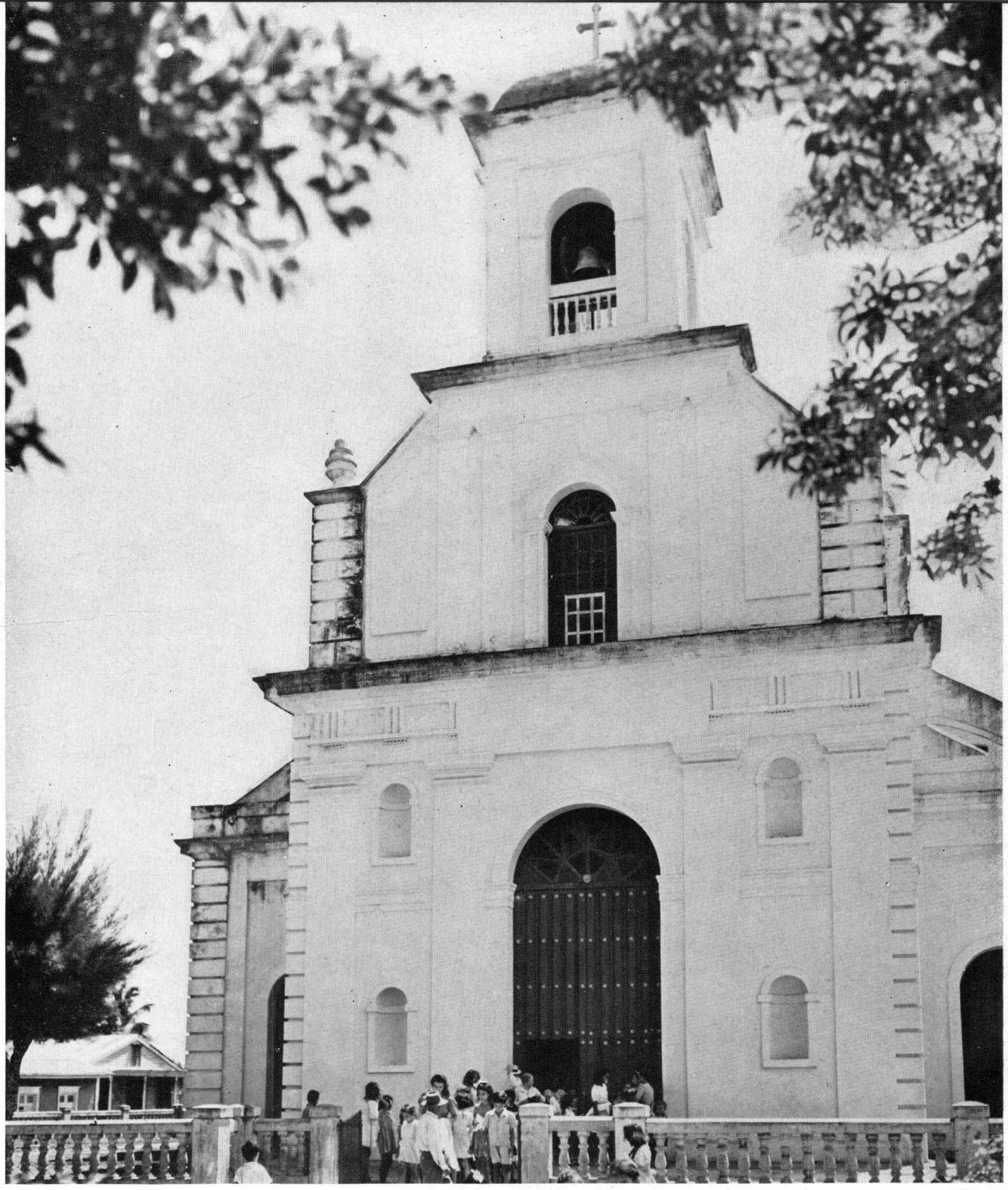


We Puerto Ricans learn to dance almost before we can walk, and dancing is also one of our favorite diversions. In the nineteenth century we developed the stately *danza,* a ballroom dance preceded by the traditional *paseo,* in which each caballero escorts his partner in a march around the room, fanning her obsequiously and whispering gallant nothings in her ear. Today, however, our younger generation prefer the more modern *bolero, guaracha, conga,* and foxtrot; and even in the conservative "casinos" or social centers of our towns and cities, these imported products are displacing the strains of our own *danzas.*

Our modern composers, though they ordinarily choose modern media, still write songs that are definitely our own. Rafael Hernández, for ex-

ample, a Puerto Rican living in Mexico, has had many popular successes with patriotic, social, and lyrical themes. His best liked compositions, such as "Preciosa," "Lamento Borincano," and "Los Carreteros," savor strongly of his native soil.

Our interest in serious music is fostered by such organizations as Pro-Arte Musical, which brings musicians from the Continent; the excellent choruses of the University of Puerto Rico and Polytechnic Institute; and the University itself, which sponsors concerts by visiting artists. The Figueroa family, seven outstanding musicians, are a focus of musical activity. And Jesús María Sanromá, recording artist and former solo pianist of the Boston Symphony, makes almost annual appearances on the Island.



Puerto Rico was, for 400 years, a colony of Spain, where Church and State were united. Our first governor built our first church. Our first bishop was an Inquisitor. Our first public instruction was carried on by the clergy. And the church is usually the most prominent building on the public plaza; its bells ringing for matins or for vespers or tolling some soul on its way to another world, furnish an obbligato for the tranquil life of the small town or chime in vain against the din of the big city. Most of us call ourselves Roman Catholics. But like its bells, the Church impinges upon our lives to varying degrees: some of us are dominated by it; and some of us respond to its influence only in the marginal areas of our consciousness.

On high feast days, most of us take part in the pageantry, either as participants or as spectators. Holy Week offers a good example of a truly popular religious celebration, embracing rich and poor, townsman and countryman.

On Palm Sunday, a procession through the streets of the town commemorates the triumphal entry of Christ into Jerusalem.

Beginning on Monday of Holy Week, the churches go into deep mourning: votive candles are extinguished; the statues of the saints are covered with palls; and the holy water is drained from the fonts.

Every evening during this week, a ceremony commemorative of the Via Crucis is held in the church.

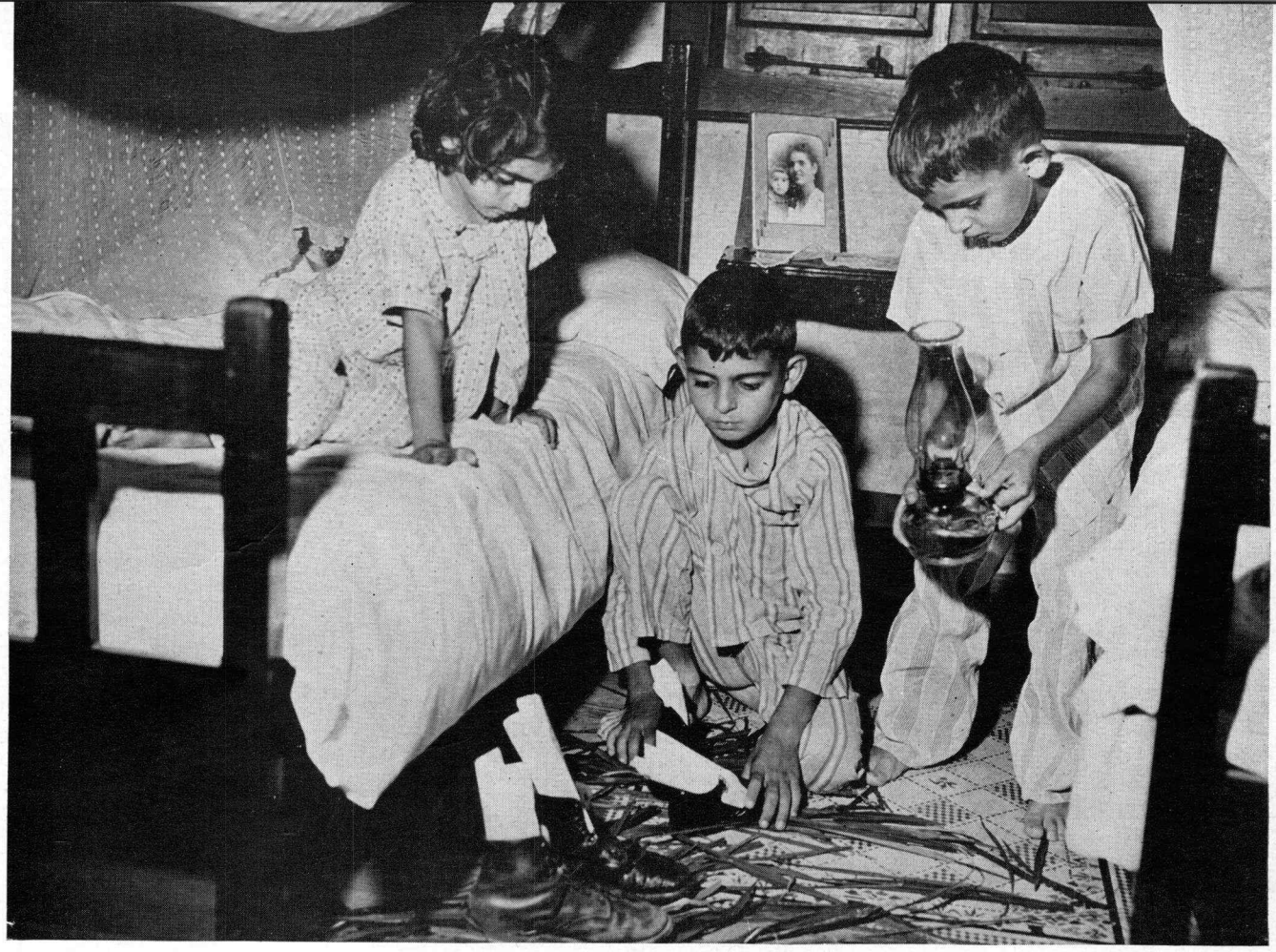
On Thursday the Lavatory takes place. In memory of Christ's washing the feet of His disciples, the priest laves, dries, and kisses the feet of twelve old men of the community.

Then comes the celebration of Good Friday, so dear to the country people, who fill the town to overflowing.

And on Saturday morning, at ten o'clock, Gloria in Excelsis Deo rings out in the church; the bells peal forth for the first time in the week; music is played; the palls are lifted from the altars; and fire for the votive candles and water for the fonts are blessed.

At six o'clock on Easter morning, the image of Christ is carried in one direction through the town, and that of the Mater Dolorosa in another. They meet; the Virgin makes obeisance to her Son; and the two are taken back to the church.

The ceremonies of Holy Week end appropriately with the Easter Mass.



Some of our other religious holidays have their secular side as well as the more formally ecclesiastical one. Christmas, for example, entails at least a couple of weeks of festivities and merrymaking. But, as elsewhere in the world, the children's share in this celebration is the most important one.

In recent years, Santa Claus and the Christmas tree have been competing with the Three Kings (the Three Wise Men of English tradition) for the favor of our boys and girls. In few cases Santa Claus has won out. In others, the eclectic children patronize both. But in most cases, the Three Kings are still the ones who bring Christmas presents to our homes.

The pre-Christmas season is one of most exemplary behavior. Then, on the fifth of January, María, Pedro, and José go out and gather grass and flowers for the camels of the Three Kings, for the beasts will be very hungry after their long journey from the East. This provender is put in boxes or near shoes under the bed; and fortunate is the child who can set out an extra box in a godfather's or a grandmother's house.

After all preparations have been carefully made, then to sleep; and no peeking allowed! During the night, Gaspar, Melchor, and Balthasar ride through. They stop at the houses of all the good children long enough to leave some presents and to allow their camels to eat the offerings of grass and flowers. At the crack of dawn, the children are up and at the boxes of presents. Delighted cries, laughter, thanks; and then they are out on the street beating their newly acquired drums, tooting their horns, blowing their whistles, and spreading noisy happiness throughout the neighborhood.

Birthdays are not observed in Puerto Rico so commonly as saints' days. In a Catholic country such as ours, almost everybody takes his Christian name from some saint; and the day of this saint, as designated in the Church Calendar, is one of gifts, parties, and general celebration. If, as often occurs, one's saint's day also happens to be one's birthday, nobody is the wiser. Therefore even sensitive spinsters can go on, year after year, enjoying their saints' days without being reminded of embarrassing chronology.

Though the majority of us are Catholics, other groups have also gained considerable footing in the Island. The Masons, for example, go back to Spanish times when they often represented liberalism in politics at times when liberalism was persecuted. Spiritualism, also, both of the genuine and of the racketeering variety, is old among us.

Protestantism as such, however, came to the Island with the United States flag. Before 1898, one Anglican church was the sole non-Roman temple in Puerto Rico.

The progress that Protestantism has made in less than half a century is due, of course, to various factors. One is the rare good sense shown by its leaders in eliminating interdenominational competition. The Methodists, the Baptists, the Presbyterians, and the Brethren divided the Island into districts, and with the exception of the larger cities, each group is limited to a given area. These churches also united to found a common Evangelical Seminary, located near the University of Puerto Rico, in Río Piedras. The graduates of this seminary form a Protestant clergy which is predominantly Puerto Rican. And the work of the Protestant churches has been largely among the lower economic classes, who have found in hymn singing and congregational activities, means of self-expression that Catholicism did not always provide.

In addition to the larger denominations, Puerto Rico has recently seen a rapid growth of smaller sects of the type that often occupy the "storefront" churches on the Continent.

PART IV:

TOGETHER WE ARE SOLVING OUR PROBLEMS

Puerto Rico is a complex of problems—economic, social, and political in their nature. And each of these problems affects and is affected by a dozen more.

The Island lacks natural resources such as minerals, petroleum, and extensive water power. Therefore its economy is predominantly agricultural. But agriculture, to be profitable, must concentrate upon an easily exportable product of high cash value per acre—hence sugar, tobacco, and pineapples. Sugar growing and manufacture, however, are necessarily large-scale propositions. They have therefore led to large landholdings; the lack of native capital has led to absentee ownership; and these two situations have brought about the downfall of the small farmer and his conversion into a peon or a dweller in the growing city slums. Furthermore, sugar interests have controlled government by contributing to party funds, buying votes, getting corporation lawyers into the local Legislature, influencing Washington appointments and policies.

Add to this picture the acute overpopulation, which leads to poverty, which leads to disease, which reduces the energies needed to cope with the problem; and you get the house-that-Jack-built character of the Puerto Rican dilemma.

Add again the political angle, and things look even more hopeless. In lieu of a constitution, we are bound by an Organic Act that we had no part in making and that we cannot amend.

Our presidentially appointed Governor may be an able statesman or a party hack receiving his just recompense for expert ward-heeling. He may know something about our problems; or he may have previous acquaintance with Puerto Rico only through our rums. He may sympathize with the aims of our duly elected representatives; or those aims may be anathema to him.

The recent appointment to the Governorship of Don Jesús T. Piñero, our majority-elected Resident Commissioner, and the candidate recommended by our Legislature, was the act of President Truman, the same executive who has asked Congress to let us decide our own political future. This appointment of our first Puerto Rican Governor was a proof of good faith and of good judgment. But, except as it is an earnest of better things to come, it leaves us exactly where we were before, with a Governor who does not legally represent us, who is not legally responsible to us.

The presidentially appointed Attorney General also exerts a considerable influence upon a country that has no voice in his selection. For example, when the courts ruled that only this official could initiate action to enforce the 500-acre landholding limitation of the Organic Act, the then Attorney General calmly folded his hands and refused to do any initiating.

We cannot even educate our children in the ways of democracy; for our undemocratic educational system is under the almost omnipotent rule of the Commissioner of Education, another presidential appointee.

Our Legislature is similarly hogtied. Any of its bills may be vetoed by the Governor; and if his veto is overridden, the legislation goes to the President for similar action. Furthermore, Congress itself can repeal any Puerto Rican law. Though it has never exerted that power, open threats that it may do so, add to our sense of insecurity.

Our Resident Commissioner in Washington may introduce bills and speak in the House of Representatives, and he may serve on committees. But even this one representative of the democratically expressed will of 2,000,000 American citizens, has no vote. Therefore his influence is extremely limited.

On those occasions when we have to appeal to Washington, therefore, we often find that executives and legislators are too busy with international, national, and their own local problems to be aware of or much interested in learning about the affairs of a small island 1500 miles away that has no voting power in national elections and no voting representatives in the national government. Furthermore, we have learned that

one man in Washington can hold up an appointment favored by the majority of Puerto Ricans or prevent Island-sponsored legislation from getting out of committee to the floor of Congress.

As world citizens, therefore, we await the dawning of the freedoms of the Atlantic Charter. As United States citizens, we await the moment when American democracy will bridge the gap of 1500 miles between Washington and San Juan. But as Puerto Ricans we cannot be content with waiting. We have girded up our loins and gone into action. And here are some of the things that we have done:

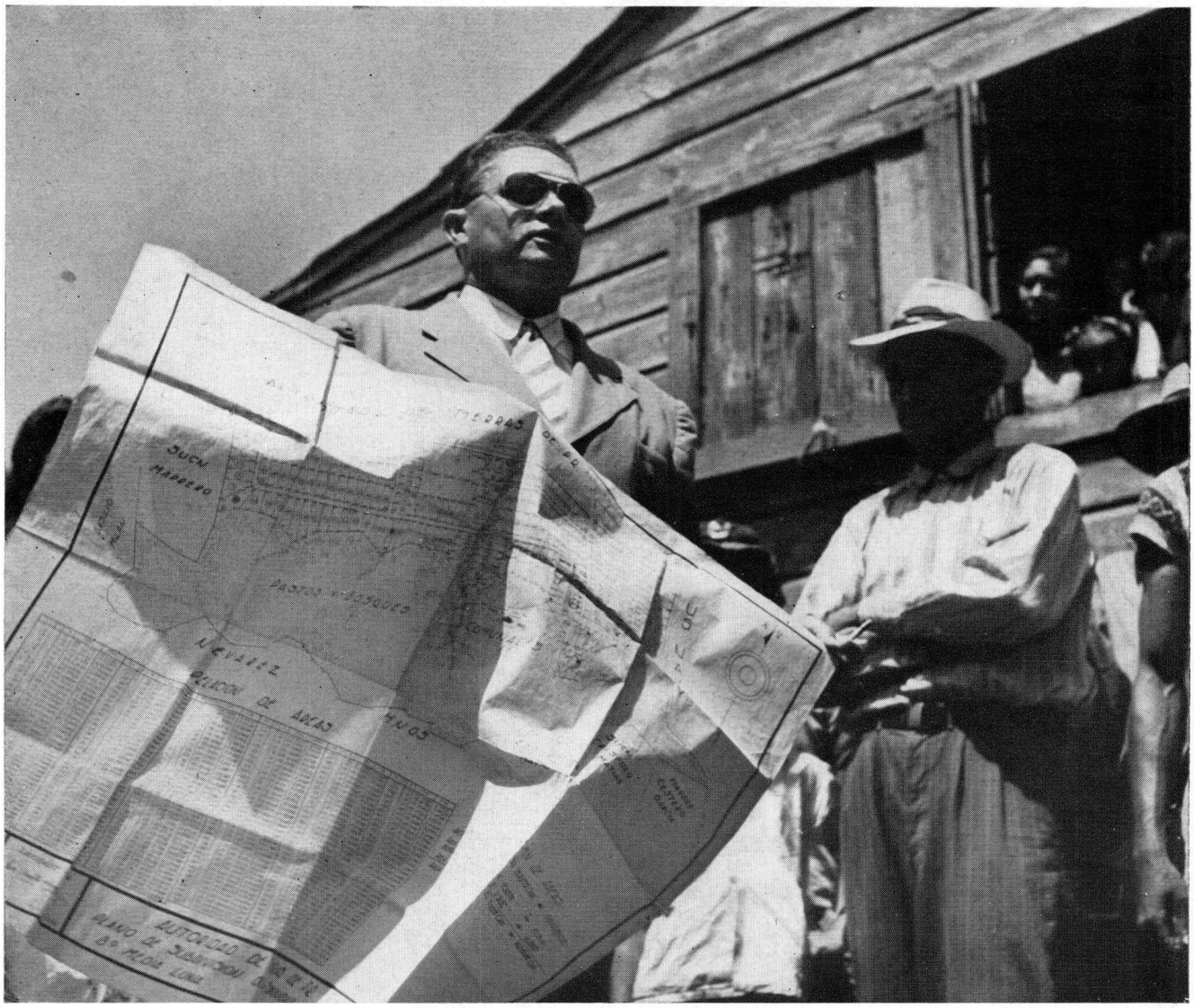
On the local political front, we have swept into power a new party whose battle-cry was: "Don't sell your vote!"; whose slogan of "Bread, Land, Liberty" was implemented by a platform of specific promises; whose advice to voters was: "If one of our men goes back on these promises, chalk it up against him for the next elections"; and whose insignia is the straw-hatted countryman who makes up two-thirds of our population.

On the national front, all our political parties have joined hands to demand that Puerto Rico be allowed to decide her own political future through a democratic plebiscite.

GOBIERNO de PUERTO RICO
AUTORIDAD de TIERRAS
La tierra de Puerto Rico
ha de ser considerada como
fuente de vida, de dignidad y
libertad económica.
LEY de TIERRAS de PUERTO RICO
12 de abril de 1941
COMUNIDAD

LAND GOES TO THE PEOPLE

One of the things that the government promised the people—and that it is giving them—is land. As soon as the new Popular Democratic Party obtained a working majority in the Insular Legislature, it created the Land Authority. The function of this agency is to get back to the people land held by corporations in violation of the 500-acre limit set by Congress 46 years ago. Though these companies have admittedly defied the law of the land, most purchases are made by mutual agreement. Recalcitrant lawbreakers, however, may be expropriated.



In Puerto Rico, 150,000 families of agricultural workers are landless. For them, security is an empty word: they live on other men's land and are at the mercy of the owners. If these people are sugar workers, the canefields are likely to reach the very doors of their huts, for cane land is too valuable to be wasted on kitchen gardens and goat pasture.

The Land Authority is endeavoring to eliminate this economic class by giving subsistence plots to the family heads. By September 1946, over 15,000 plots from a quarter of an acre up to three acres had been distributed free to landless farm workers.

In each subsistence settlement, land is set aside for schools, welfare agencies, churches, a community pasture, and a playground.

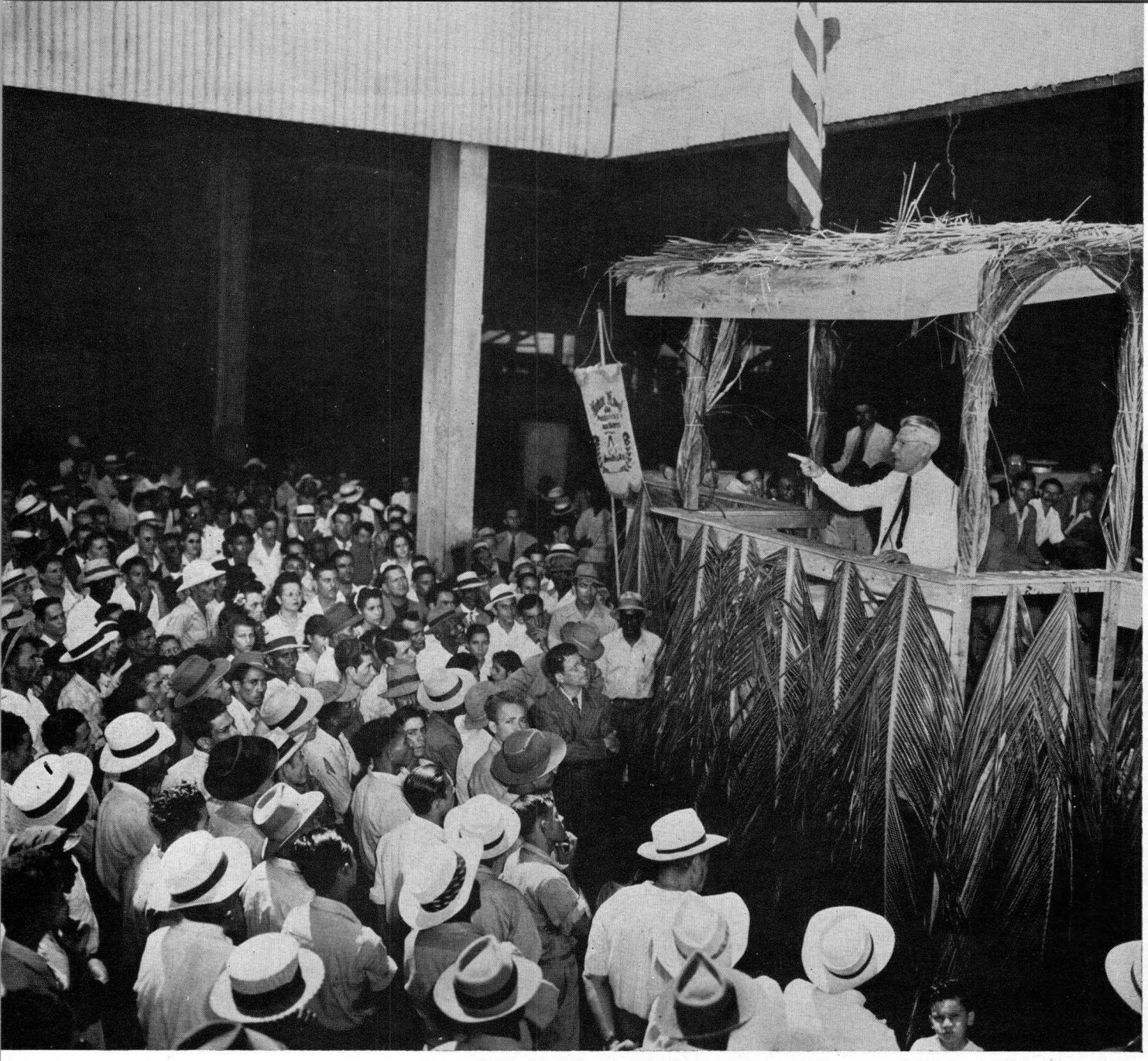
After these plans have been made and the plots have been numbered, comes the dramatic climax of the "drawing."

The eligible workers are all there with their families and friends. The people from the Land Authority say a few words. Then one of them borrows a straw hat and mixes the numbered slips of paper in it.

"Juan Pérez!"

A young *agregado* works his way through the crowd. He thrusts a trembling hand into the hat and draws out a slip. Plot No. 134.

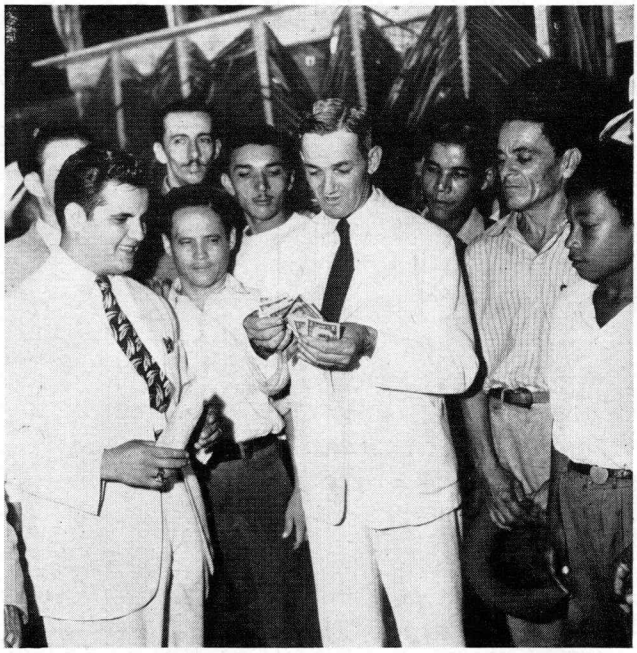
"Congratulations, Señor Pérez!" The Land Authority representative shakes hands with the new landowner. Then relatives and friends press around, and Juan Pérez smiles proudly. He will soon be building his new home.



Another way of getting the land back to the people is by means of "proportional-benefit farms." These large units (100 to 500 acres or more) are run by experienced farm managers on a percentage basis. The workers receive legal wages, plus an annual share of the net profits proportional to the working hours that they have put in during the year.

The first sugar mill with its surrounding land to be purchased by the Land Authority, has made an encouraging record. It has increased the area under cultivation without the purchase of additional land; it has increased the sugar yield per acre; it has increased production per worker employed; it has increased the number of workers on its payroll; it has increased wages; it has decreased the cost per ton of sugar produced; it has paid higher property taxes than the former owner; and it has still shown a profit comparable to what it made as a private enterprise. This profit, from both land and sugar factory, has produced substantial proportional benefits for the workers.

The distribution of proportional benefits, like the parceling out of land, is made into a public ceremony in which the *dramatis personae* are the workers, now for the first time in their lives, reaping the just rewards of their labor.



NEW HOUSES ARE BUILT

Housing is bound to be a problem in an overpopulated country, especially when most of the adequate building materials have to be imported from a distance. We have found no complete answer to this problem, but both Federal and Insular governments have been attacking it for some time.

Of course the best way to get rid of slums is to raise the economic and educational standards of the people above slum levels. That we are trying our utmost to do.

By way of furnishing cheaper building materials, both the Development Company and a private corporation are producing cement locally. Experiments on small buildings have also been made with bamboo to reinforce cement and with adobe to take its place.

In addition to all this, actual slum clearance, both rural and urban, has been undertaken on a limited scale, and plans have been laid for expanding this work.

Ten years ago, the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration built a 216-family "phalanstery" for a low-income group of workers. The Puerto Rico Economic Reconstruction Administration and the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, New Deal agencies, began the work of rural slum elimination with the establishment of 4,054 farm families in concrete houses on four- to six-acre tracts. The present work of the Land Au-

thority with its subsistence farms for sharecroppers, also helps considerably to better rural housing conditions.

The Federal Housing Authority works through local banks to facilitate the construction or purchase of homes for the middle-income group on long-term credit at low interest.

The recently created Puerto Rico Housing Authority, and the municipal housing authorities of San Juan, Ponce, and Mayagüez, all of which collaborate with the Federal Public Housing Administration, have been severely handicapped by war and post-war conditions. In already existing projects, however, the Puerto Rico Housing Authority has carried on social and educational activities such as the organization of tenants' associations, the establishment of women's clubs, the operation of 4-H Clubs, the establishment of school lunchrooms, and, with the cooperation of the War Emergency Program, the setting up of day nurseries. This authority received a grant of $2,220,000 in 1944 for the purchase of land and the preparation of plans for post-war projects. It also has an annual rotating fund of half a million dollars which will be put to use as soon as construction work again becomes feasible.

The Puerto Rico Housing Authority has worked out extensive slum freezing and clearance programs as a guide for Federal and Insular agencies. These are ready for action as soon as materials become available.

WE IMPROVE OUR HEALTH

Puerto Rico, with the help of the Federal Government, has attacked its health problem vigorously—so vigorously that between 1936 and 1944, the deaths per thousand decreased from 20.5 to 14.1. But the battle is by no means won. Better housing, better sanitation, and above all, more adequate diets are still needed. We have no rural doctors, and only one doctor per 4,000 people for the Island as a whole.

To make up in part for these lacks, Puerto Rico, in addition to private facilities, has a series of municipal hospitals with a bed for each 1000 inhabitants. These municipal hospitals act as clearing houses for five district charity hospitals of 300 beds each. The work of these institutions is supplemented by 45 public health units, 77 rural health centers, 20 tuberculosis clinics (plus an X-ray traveling unit), an Insular hospital of psychiatry, a leper hospital, and four diagnostic and three rapid-treatment centers for veneral diseases.

The Insular Health Department also works on hookworm control (through the building of latrines in the rural zone); malaria control (through examinations, treatments, and elimination of mosquitoes); immunization (against smallpox, diphtheria, typhoid, and whooping cough); typhus control (through an anti-rat campaign); and maternal and infant hygiene. It also offers limited public health nursing services and school health services.

All these efforts, however, are to a certain extent mere palliatives as long as economic conditions keep housing, sanitation, and diet below subsistence standards. The main efforts of the Insular Government have been directed towards basically improving these underlying conditions.

A picture of the problem may be gained from the fact that in 1945 a daily average of 31,612 workers were employed by the government on the relief projects of the War Emergency Program, while 194,943 applicants were waiting for the same kinds of jobs. Moreover, 26,466 destitute cases were receiving public assistance of $7.50 a month and 47,832 more requests for that pittance were pending action. All these groups taken together make up almost 15% of the entire population of the Island.

Whatever means we take of attacking our problems, the coming generation must be physically strong enough to benefit by our efforts. Therefore we are concerned with child nutrition.

In 1942, Federal and Insular agencies, public-minded citizens, and civic associations began to cooperate in the Child Feeding Program, Citizens Service Corps, of the Office of Civilian Defense. This organization, under the direction of Mrs. Grace F. Tugwell, wife of the Governor of Puerto Rico, fed needy children between two and seven years of age. Many of these children had not tasted milk since their infancy.

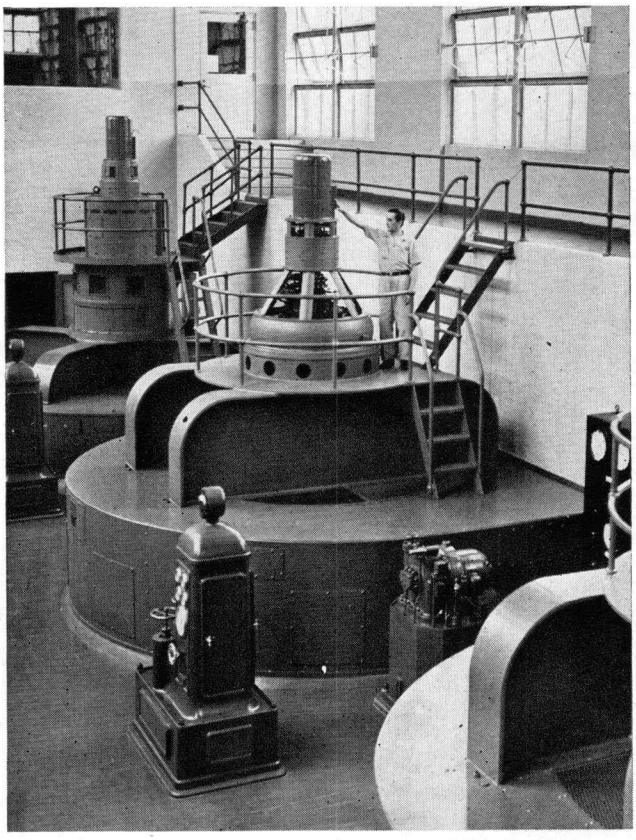
To run the milk stations, hundreds of women gave their services. The Office of Distribution of Puerto Rico supplies some 3,000,000 pounds of food annually. Sugar centrals contribute over 60,000 pounds of sugar. Private donations make up the additional $180 per year necessary to maintain each station that serves 100 or more children.

In 1945, the Insular Government's War Emergency Program took over the child feeding activities of the Office of Civilian Defense. Some 415 centers are now feeding around 50,000 children. However, between three and four times that number of needy pre-school children still lack attention.

Older children in every town of the Island benefit from the school lunchrooms that serve an average of one balanced meal a day to approximately 167,000 pupils, or around 48% of the total public school enrollment. This meal is too often the only substantial one the children get.

The school feeding program, originally an activity of the WPA, was taken over in 1943 by the Insular War Emergency Council and in 1945 by the Department of Education itself. Other Federal and Insular agencies have cooperated effectively. During the school year of 1944-45, expenditures for school lunches reached over $4,800,000, of which a little over a half was provided by the Federal Government.

The feeding of pre-school and school children will have to form an important item in any long-time plans for the rehabilitation of Puerto Rico.



OUR PEOPLE GET ELECTRICITY

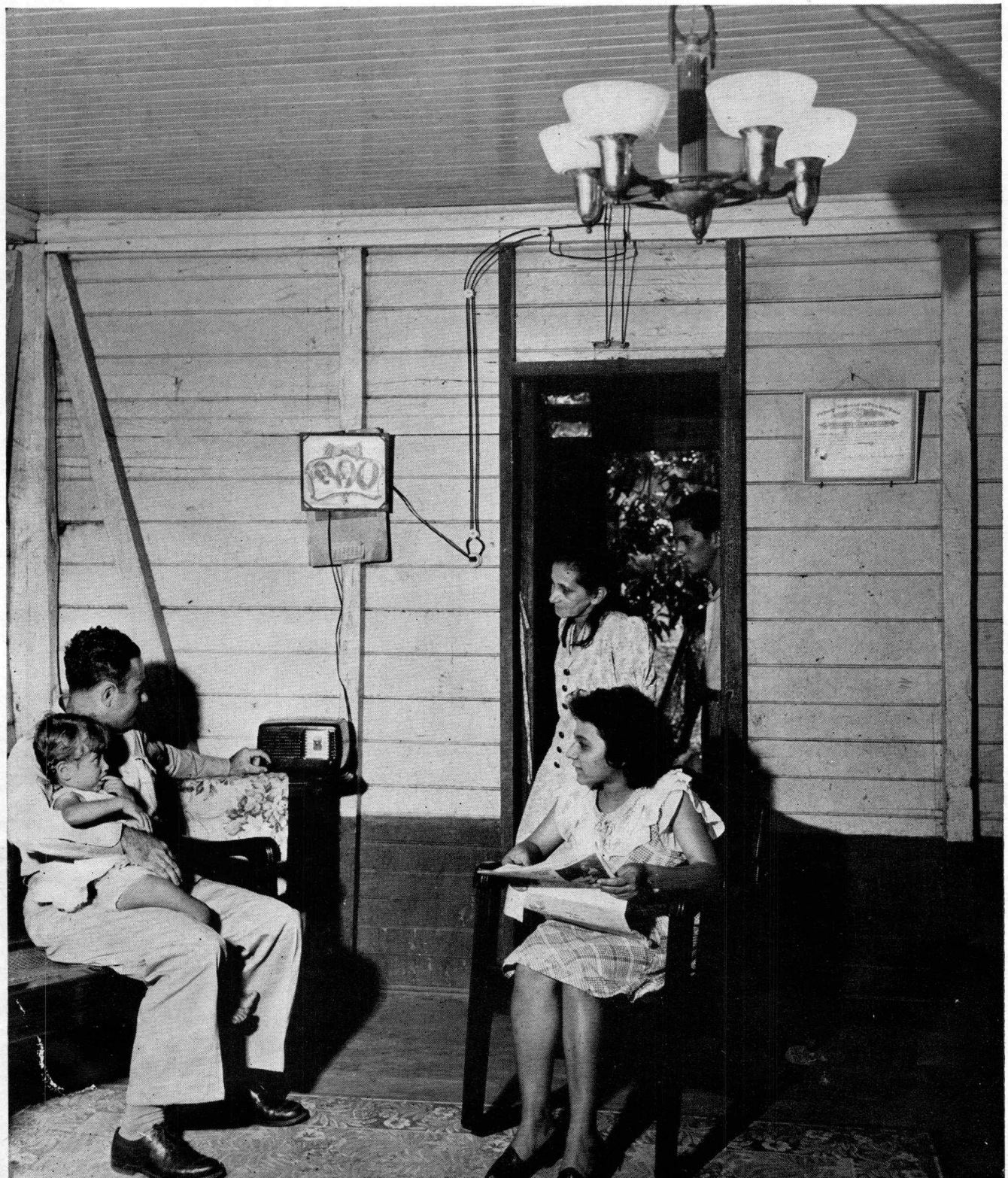
The first electric plants in Puerto Rico were installed by municipal governments as early as 1915. These expensive sources of feeble incandescence were gradually supplemented and replaced by privately and government owned systems of superior quality.

In 1944, the Puerto Rico Water Resources Authority, an Insular Government agency, took over all electric power production and distribution and reduced rates all over the Island to conform to those in the areas that it had already been serving. The Authority now operates some 500 miles of transmission lines and 650 miles of distribution lines. The source of power is largely hydro-electric, supplemented by oil-burning steam plants.

The availability of electrical energy has often been the deciding factor in the establishment of new industries such as cement, ceramic, and glass manufacture. In harmony with its program of industrialization, the Insular Government is con-

stantly expanding its production of electric power. Special emphasis is placed upon the building of new hydro-electric plants in order to bring down the cost of production. In 1945, the price of current on the Island averaged 2.3 cents per kilowatt-hour.

In addition to its interest in industrialization, the Puerto Rico Water Resources Authority is cooperating in the governmental effort to raise the standard of country life. Rural electrification is already a reality on a small scale, and plans have been made for the addition of 300 miles of rural transmission and distribution lines every year for four years. By the end of this period, electric power and light will be available in every corner of Puerto Rico.



OUR UNIVERSITY SETS THE PACE

We Puerto Ricans, like all believers in democracy, have great faith in education, and that faith has been translated into action.

In 1941, the Insular Legislature eliminated the two "starvation months" of the public school teachers by providing 12-month salaries. In 1944 came a salary scale which equalized pay of rural, elementary urban, and high school teachers of equal preparation and experience. This scale established a basic salary of $90 a month for teachers with a normal diploma, $105 a month for those with a bachelor's degree, and correspondingly higher salaries for more advanced preparation. A minimum of a year's residence in the United States is considered an essential part of the training of teachers of English and is so recognized by an increment of $10. Supervisory positions carry bonuses depending upon the task involved. And all teachers receive a monthly increment of $2.00 from their third to their twelfth year of service, inclusive.

The Insular Government has also begun to put into practice a six-year plan of school expansion intended to extend educational opportunities to all, to equalize those opportunities to the greatest possible extent, and to improve their quality. The cost of this program is estimated at approximately $135,000,000, or over 14 times the school appropriations for 1944.

Since, however, the administration of our school system is entirely devoid of any democratic link with the people, our government has had to limit its far-reaching educational reforms to the University.

The University of Puerto Rico, an institution with 8,375 regular students and a faculty of over 600, consists of two main divisions. At Mayagüez are the Colleges of Agriculture and Engineering and a College of Science. At Río Piedras are Colleges of Humanities, Science, Social Sciences, Education, Pharmacy, Business Administration, and Law. During the academic year, the University also operates afternoon and evening extension courses at Río Piedras, and twelve extramural centers in other towns of the Island. During the summer it runs a six-week session, largely for public school teachers, which, in 1946, had an enrollment of 6,000 students.

The Agricultural Extension Service and the Experimental Station form part of the University of Puerto Rico, as does also a School of Industrial Arts located in Río Piedras.

In San Juan is the University's School of Tropical Medicine, a graduate school and research center, the only institution of its kind in the Western Hemisphere.

The University of Puerto Rico occupies a position of unique importance in the life of the Island since, with the exception of two small, privately endowed colleges, it is the only institution of higher education in the country. It produces most of our teachers, engineers, agricultural experts, lawyers, and pharmacists, gives premedical training to our doctors, and furnishes a cultural background to leaders in all walks of life.

Therefore, the quality of our University is a matter of prime interest to an education-minded people.

The first step towards University reform taken by the new party in power, was to remove the institution from the political arena without divorcing it from the people. This feat was accomplished in two moves. First, the old Board of Trustees, largely composed of ex-officio political appointees, was replaced by the Superior Educational Council with only one ex-officio member (the Commissioner of Education), the other members being appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate for overlapping 10-year terms. Two of these members must be outsiders, and five must be residents of Puerto Rico. Second, this body was deprived of its power of appointment (except for the appointment of the Chancellor), and of direct intervention in the University administration, except for the laying down of general educational policies, approval of the budget *in toto*, and decisions of appeals. The administration of the University is now vested in the Chancellor and a board composed of the deans, a faculty representative, and a student representative.

Under this new setup, the University has declared Spanish the official language of instruction and has shown its interest in English by adding an hour a week to the basic course in this subject, establishing an English Institute to investigate the problems of English teaching in

the public schools, and bringing visiting professors of English of the caliber of Dr. Robert Morss Lovett in literature and Dr. Lee S. Hultzén in phonetics.

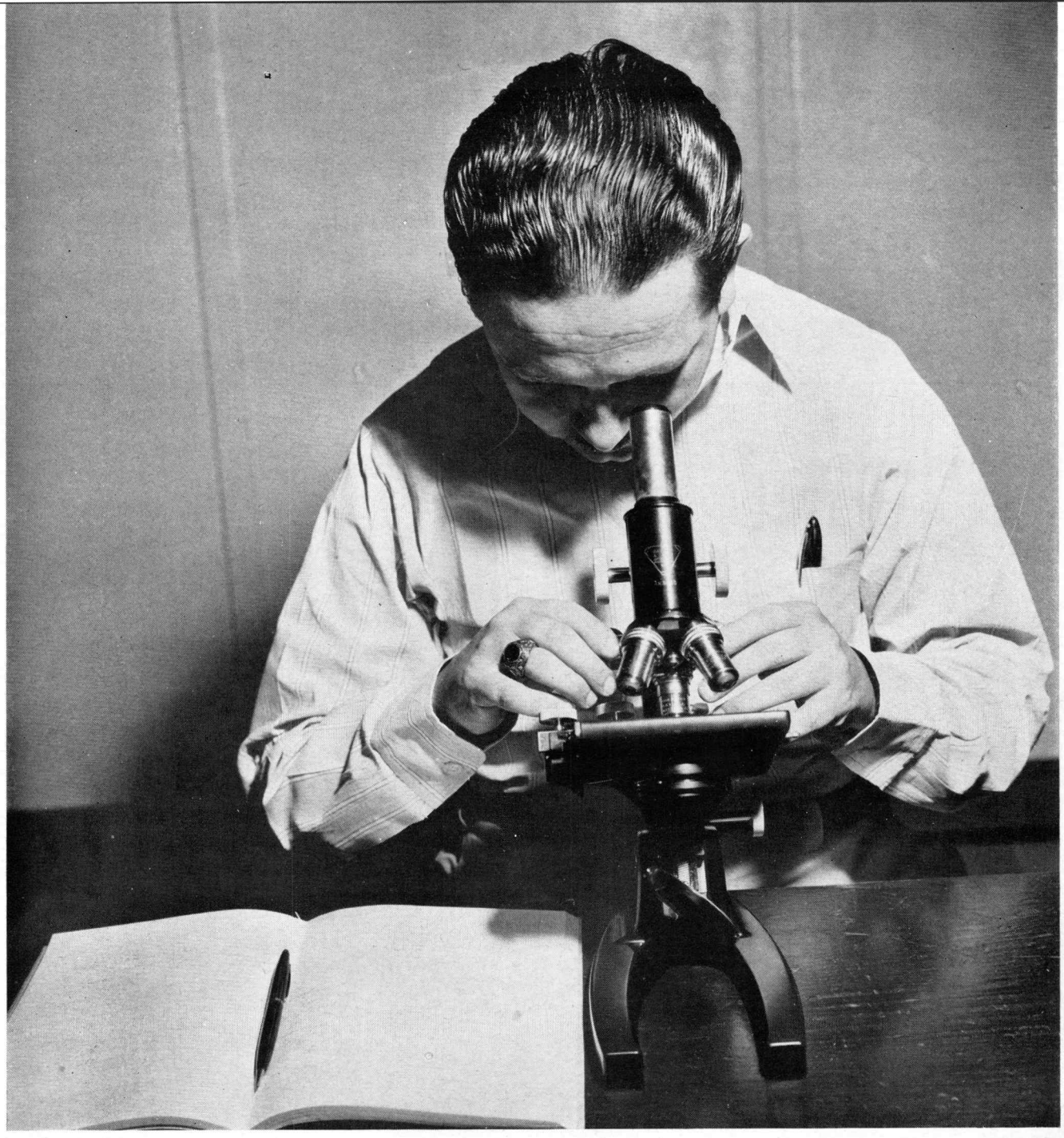
This policy of opening our doors to the cultural representatives of other countries has brought us great benefits. From Spain we have, for example, the poet, Dr. Pedro Salinas, the painters Cristóbal Ruiz and Esteban Vicente, and the sculptor Compostela. Another Spaniard, Dr. Antonio Fabra Ribas, and a Nova Scotian, Father Joseph A. McDonald, have taught courses in the cooperative movement. The former well known lawyer of Germany, Dr. Max Rheinstein, taught in our law school; and the naturalized Italian Dr. Giuseppe Borgese, offered us classes in literature and philosophy. An American Negro, Dr. Robert Thornton, teaches mathematics in the Colleges of Agriculture and Engineering, and Professor Rexford Guy Tugwell, former Governor of Puerto Rico, for a while divided his time between Chicago University and our Social Research Center.

Our students, two-thirds of whom come from families with an annual income of less than $1,200, are aided with scholarships that reach down into the high schools for promising material and continue throughout the University life of some 425 deserving cases. A lunchroom serves 4800 students a month at a nominal charge, with special discounts and even free meals under special circumstances. A student Service Board takes care of individual and group problems of the students, for whom medical and psychiatrical services are also provided. The University even maintains a special office in the Continental

United States for the benefit of Puerto Rican students who are enrolled in the various American universities. A hundred and thirty-five of these students are receiving graduate and research scholarships from the University of Puerto Rico, which gives special attention to applications from medical students.

The practice of bringing the people to the University through our system of scholarships, is supplemented by an effort to take the University to the people through the extramural courses and various extracurricular activities.

Both resident and visiting professors offer frequent public lectures. Several of the radio stations of the Island have found that the public is greatly interested in a series of roundtable discussions and interviews organized by the Director of Information of the University. These



discussions treat topics of local and international interest and include both University and outside experts.

A well trained University chorus tours the Island every year and makes appearances in both public and private institutions. A University theater offers excellent presentations of foreign and native, classical and modern drama; and the scope of this work has been extended by a self-contained, mobile unit that goes from town to town and to rural communities giving open-air performances. An exhibition hall in Río Piedras gives frequent art exhibitions that are open to the public.

For the students themselves, the Social Activities Program presents a variety of musical and dance recitals by native and visiting performers, plays, and an occasional moving picture. The University also supports two student papers, *La Torre* in Spanish, and *The Campus Reporter* in English.

The teaching program of the University has undergone considerable change since the administrative reform. One of the outstanding im-

provements has been the organization of the so-called basic courses, required of most freshmen. These courses, in English, Spanish, the Humanities, the Social Sciences, and the Natural Sciences, are intended to give the students the foundations of a common cultural background before they go into their various specializations. A similar trend towards the broadening out of the curricula has taken the form of substituting "concentrations" for majors in the College of Education. In other words, the education student, instead of majoring in a single subject, now specializes in a series of related subjects, which reinforce each other and which form a group that he may be called upon to teach when he reaches the public schools.

The success of these reforms may be measured by the fact that the University of Puerto Rico has now become one of the two institutions in Latin America accredited by school associations in the United States. The other school is the Polytechnic Institute, a privately endowed college, on the west end of the Island.

Puerto Rico is proud of its University and wonders why it should not be allowed to similarly set in order its entire public school system.

The School of Tropical Medicine gives courses in sanitary science, public health nursing, medical technology, and sanitary inspection, as well as offering refresher courses to all doctors on the Island. Investigations of various tropical diseases have added important knowledge in the cases of several of them. An extensive series of nutrition studies involving the common foodstuffs of the Island, are also proving to be of great social value throughout the Caribbean.

WE INDUSTRIALIZE

Don Luis Muñoz Marín, leader of our legislative majority and President of the Insular Senate, recently declared that the survival of Puerto Rico as a civilized country will depend upon the "battle of production." In other words, if we are not to succumb to the efforts of our rapidly increasing population, we must find a means of putting the hands to work and of feeding the mouths. This means both the intensification of agriculture and the expansion of industries.

In the past, most of Puerto Rico's industrial development has been along the line of hand crafts such as needlework or the elaboration of agricultural products, such as sugar-molasses-rum manufacturing, tobacco stemming, and cigar making. Realizing that these two traditional types of industry are not sufficient for the needs of the Island, the Insular Government has created the Puerto Rico Development Bank and the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Com-

pany. The Bank is empowered to lend government funds for the establishment or expansion of private industries or for projects sponsored by the Development Company.

The Development Company has a threefold program of attracting outside capital to the Island, of aiding outside and native capital in the establishment and expansion of private industries, and of setting up government sponsored industries in promising fields that, for one reason or another, do not yet attract private capital.

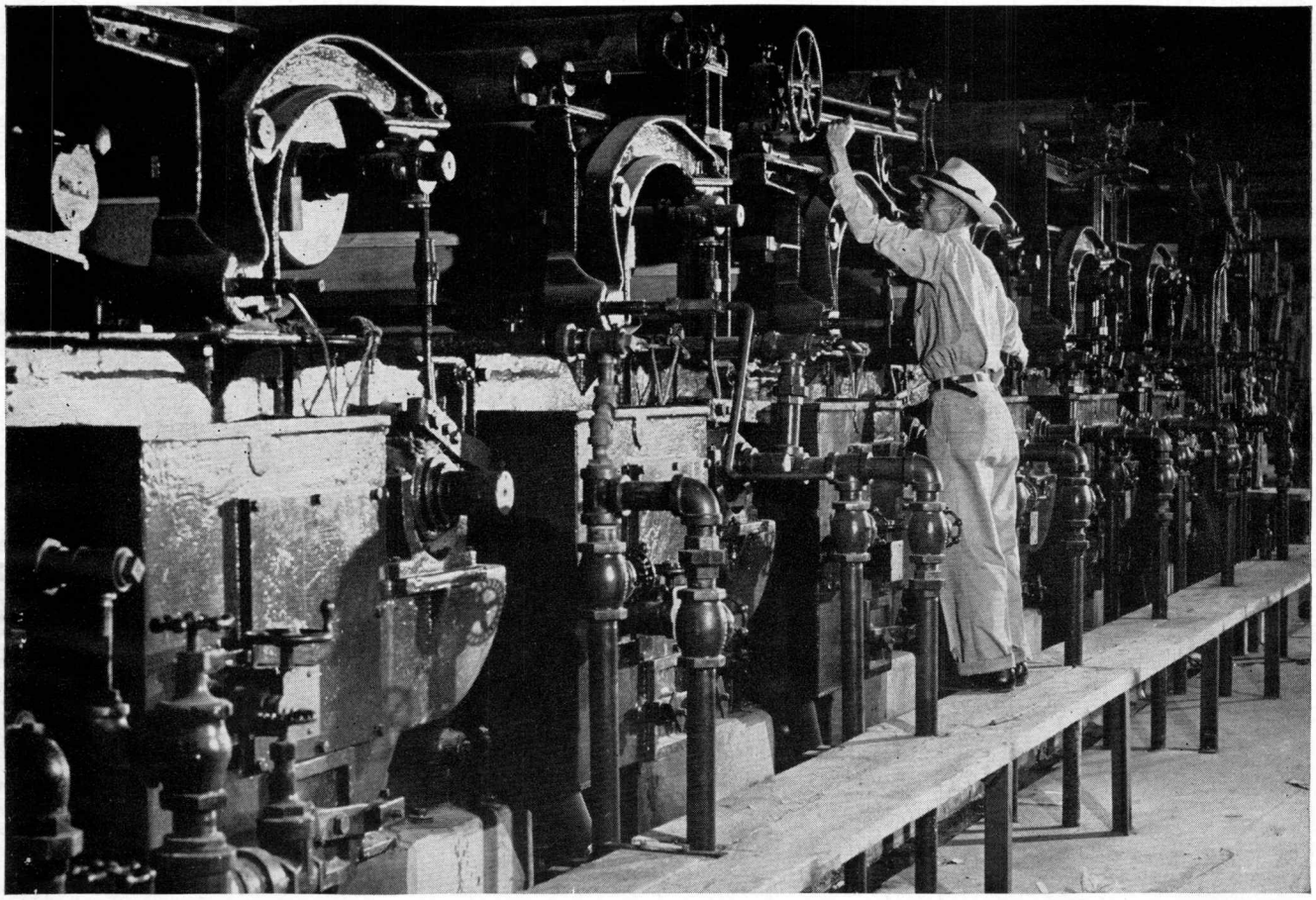
In its campaign to bring United States capital to the Island, the Development Company has employed one of the foremost advertising concerns on the Continent. The offer made is attractive: "Your own new plant built the way you want it . . . without paying a penny down. Then leased to you for as little as 1 per cent of its cost." Lessees, of course, acquire an automatic option to outright purchase. Talking points are nearness to North, Central, and South American markets, ease of importing raw materials, and labor that is plentiful, reasonable in cost, and adaptable and trainable in skills.

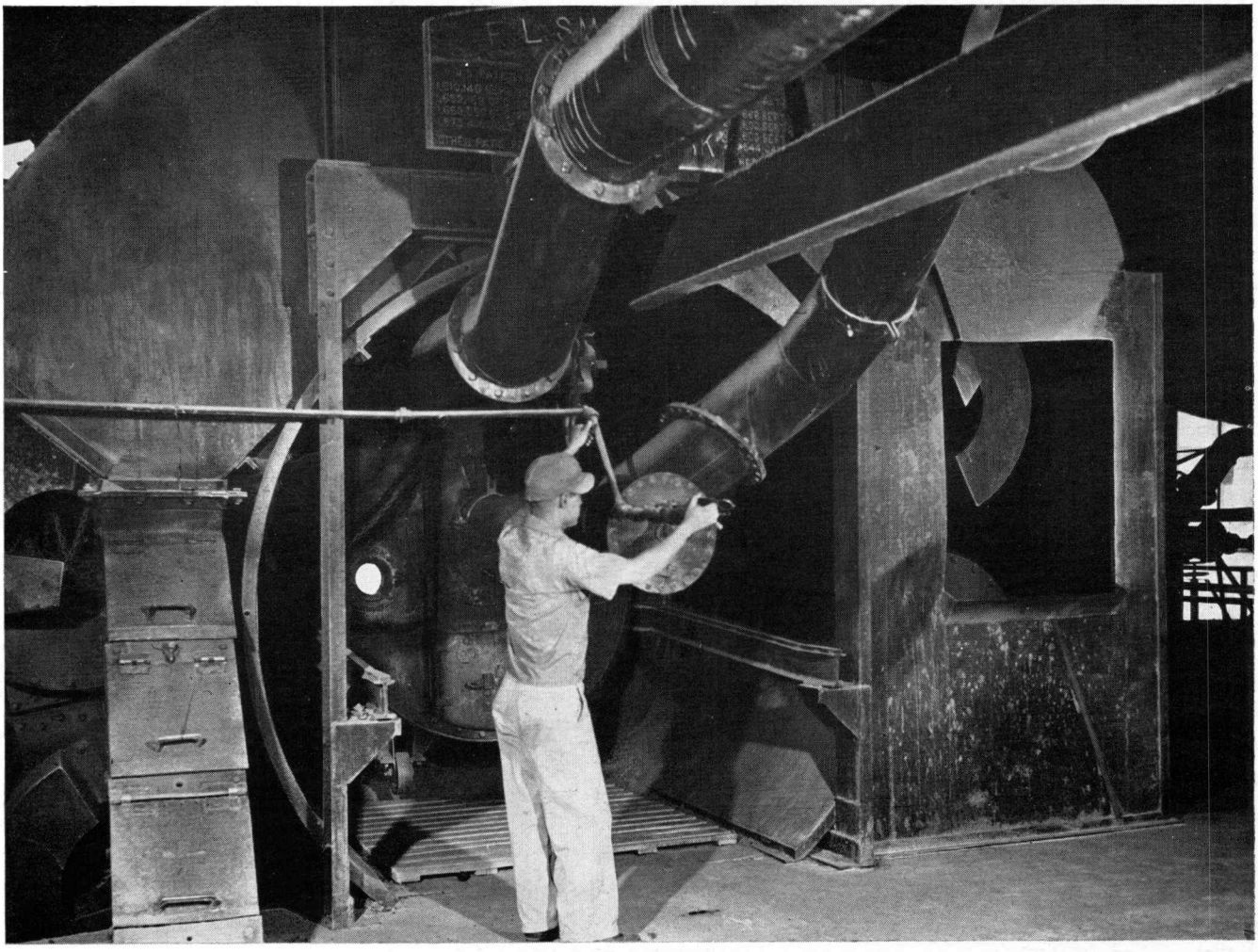
As an aid to private industries, the Development Company looks for good manufacturing sites, offers expert technical advice, and lends money.

When some new enterprise is under consideration, the Development Company does not take a plunge without a thorough survey of the situation. Such a survey often involves laboratory research, the establishment of a small "pilot plant," and a careful exploration of local and outside markets.

If these studies indicate the advisability of going ahead with the new business, an effort is usually made to interest private capital in taking the initiative. The Development Company will then continue to cooperate with the company involved.

In case private investment is not forthcoming, the Development Company itself builds the necessary plant, imports technicians, trains personnel, and goes into production.





The first cement factory in Puerto Rico was constructed by the Puerto Rico Reconstruction Administration, a New Deal Federal agency. This factory was acquired by the Insular Government in 1938, commenced production in 1939, and was taken over by the Development Company in 1942.

The clay used in the manufacture of Puerto Rican cement is found in deposits near the plant. The limestone also comes from nearby quarries, and of all the raw materials, only small quantities of gypsum have to be imported.

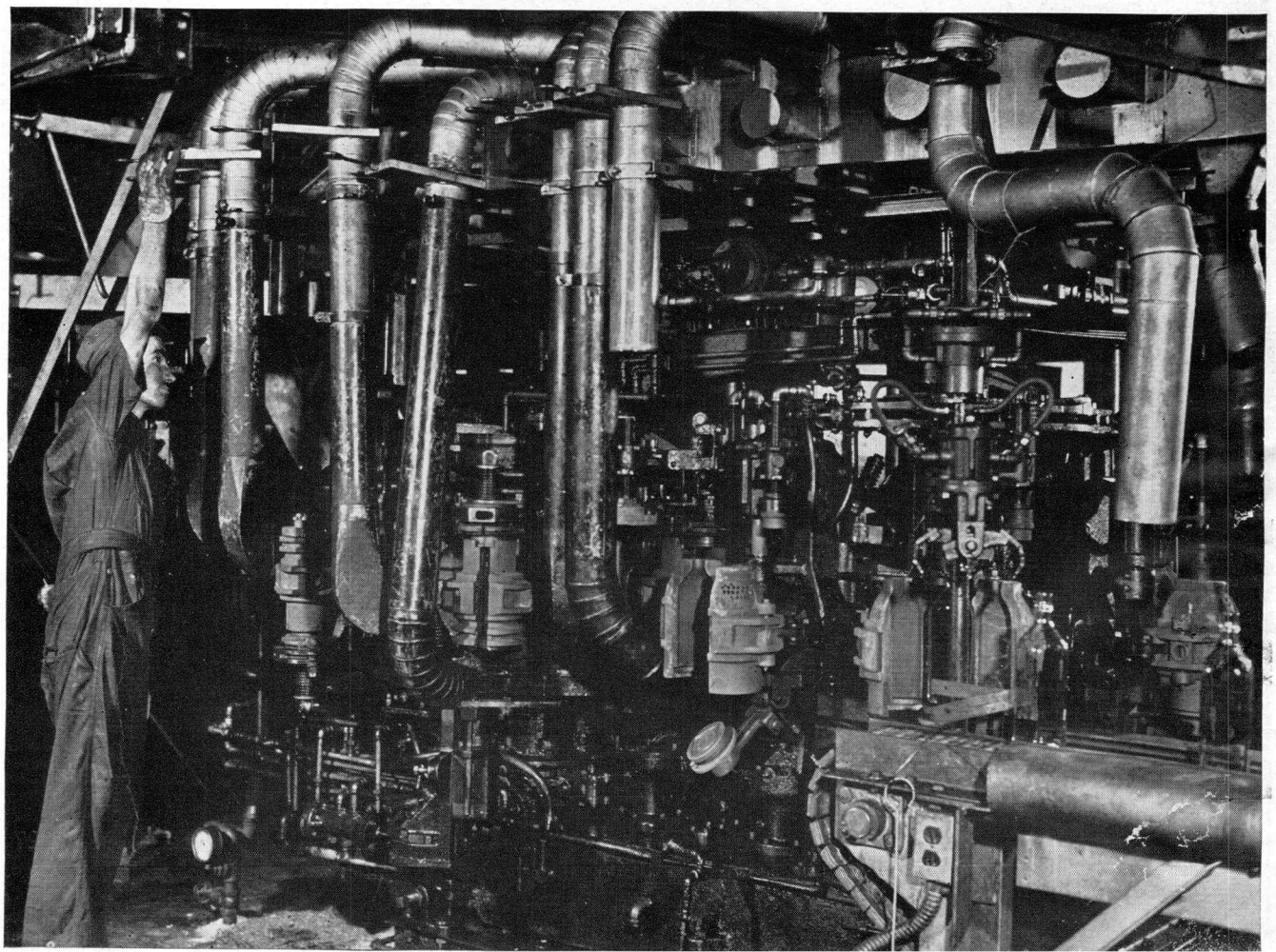
The Government cement plant has steadily increased its capacity since it was acquired by the Development Company. In 1945 it produced 768,518 barrels; and improvements will soon bring the total to a million barrels a year.

During 1945, the cement plant employed 350 workers, with an annual payroll of $361,317. Prospects of greater production imply a larger payroll in the factory itself and the lowering of the price of cement, which will encourage the building trades and thus create additional outside employment.

The cement business also furnishes a good example of close cooperation between public and private enterprise. The early success of our government-owned cement plant encouraged the creation of the Ponce Cement Company. In 1945 this organization borrowed $900,000 from the Development Bank to pay off its RFC and other loans. Business has been so good since that time that the capacity of the plant is to be increased from 2,500 to 4,000 barrels a day. And the Development Bank has agreed to lend the $600,000 necessary for this purpose.

Puerto Rico
PORTLAND CEMENT
94 LBS. NET
PUERTO RICO CEMENT CORPORATION
SAN JUAN, P. R.
Puerto Rico

REX

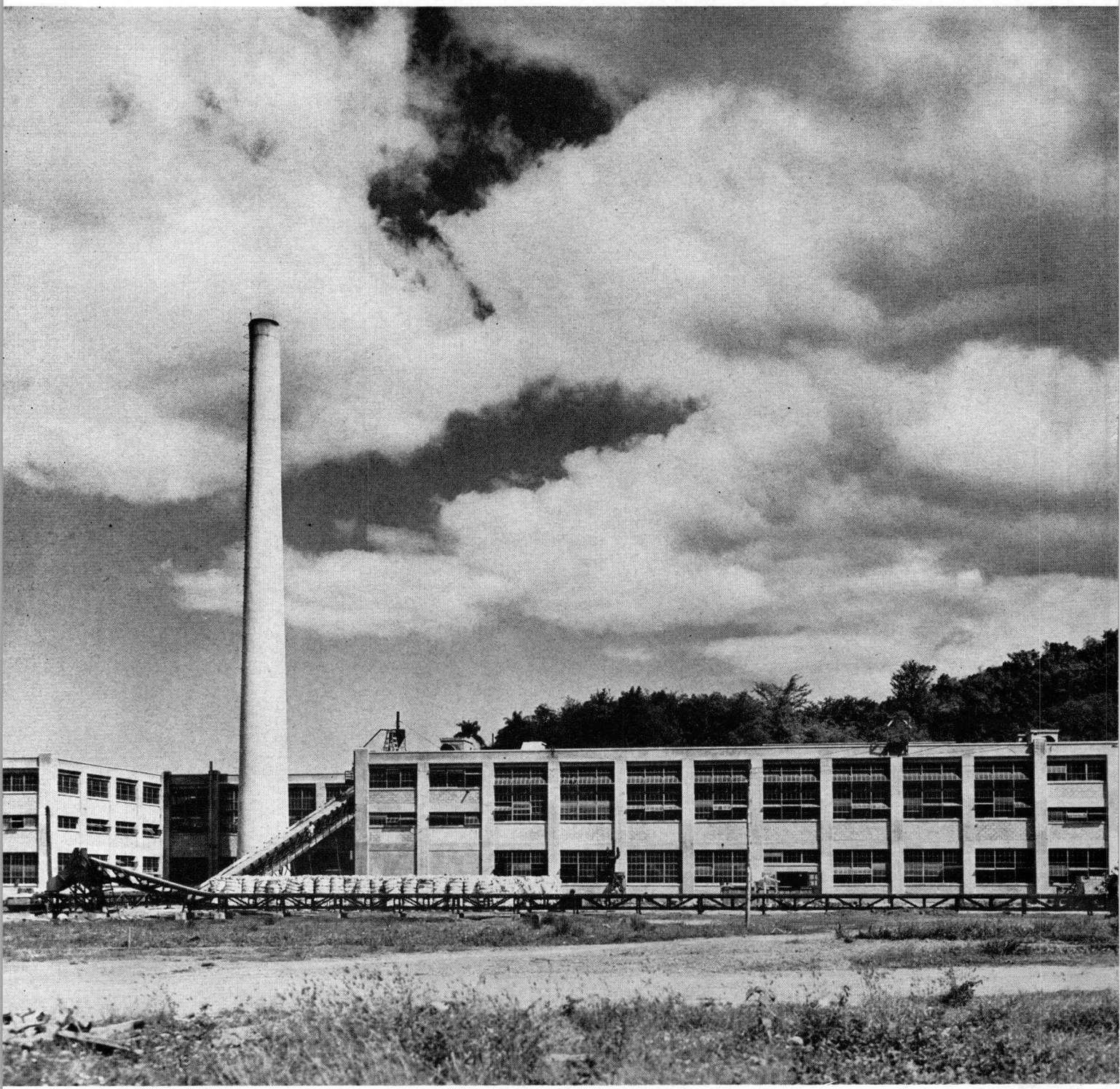


The Development Company opened its Glass Container Plant in January 1945. At the end of February, a strike closed the plant down. It reopened in June 1945, improved its labor relations, and began its fight to make up for lost time and contracts.

The type of output, originally consisting mostly of rum bottles, has been expanded to include containers for soft drinks, beer, bay rum, olives, olive oil, medicines, and other products.

Combined efforts of management and workers, together with a fortunate boom in the rum market, made May 1946, the best month in the history of the plant, with total sales for the period billed at over $255,000, well over half the entire sales for 1945.

During a recent shortage of bottles in the States, the existence of this government-owned glass plant enabled our distilleries to maintain their production and thus to contribute considerably to the stability of the Insular budget through internal revenue collections.

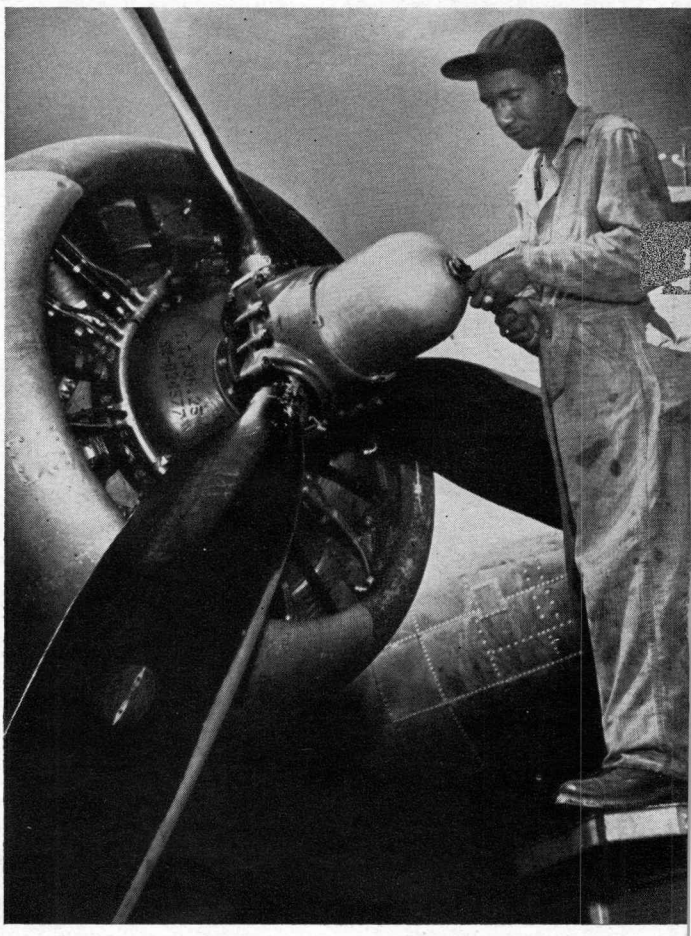


The Development Company has also entered the field of paper making. Just as cement production ties in with our construction industry, so paper making was planned to contribute to the distilling business by producing a strong paper used in making cartons for rum bottles.

The paper mill, which began working in May 1946, uses wastepaper collected on the Island as its chief raw material. Its output of some 40 tons a day has thus far been sold to a private company in Puerto Rico that manufactures cartons for the local market.

A Clay Products Plant, now in the process of construction, will occupy 100 acres and consists of four flexible units built around a central firing unit. It will utilize local deposits for the manufacture of such products as bricks, tiles, pipes, artware, stoneware, and cooking ware. Initial production is expected to employ 100 men, and full production, twice that number. The laborers engaged in making the coarser types of ceramics will require only a short period of training. For the finer types such as dinnerware, artware, decorative tile, and ceramic sculpture, a pilot plant has already started to train artisans and designers. Several of the latter are already showing great promise in their original creations.

Other industries that the Development Company plans to start are cotton weaving and spinning, and shoe manufacture. The projected cotton plant will have an annual production of 2,900,000 pounds of grey goods, over half of which will be in the form of sugar bags. The shoe factory will begin producing some 3,000 pairs of play shoes per day for export. Later, low-priced leather shoes will be turned out for the local market and export.

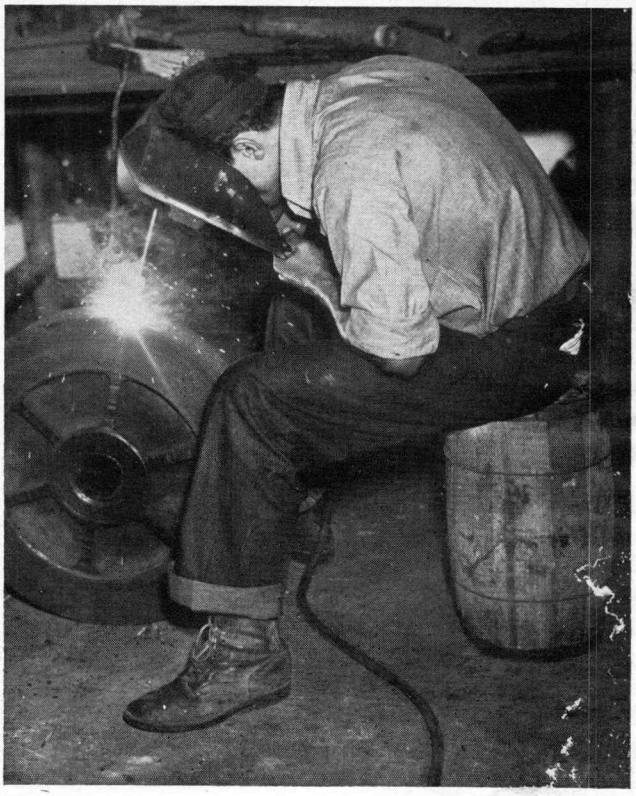


WE LEARN NEW SKILLS

The new factories and the pilot plants of the Development Company are not, however, the only agencies on the Island that are getting our people ready for new jobs.

Army training and civilian work on Armed Forces construction projects, have given vocational preparation to a considerable number of workers; and many of the veterans are taking advantage of post-service education grants to increase their skills.

The Department of Education, with aid from the Federal Government, offers pre-vocational training in its junior high schools, a diversified occupations program in some of its high schools, and vocational work in its second unit rural schools and in five vocational schools. The School of Arts and Trades at the University of Puerto Rico both trains skilled workers in the various trades and prepares teachers for the same type of work in the public schools.



are the despair of labor organizers, our Puerto Rican cane workers were among the first groups in the country to unionize; and today, the vast majority of them belong to industrial unions.

Organized labor in Puerto Rico has been responsible for a great deal of beneficial social legislation in general, and specifically for labor legislation regulating child labor; creating a minimum wage board; protecting workers against discrimination; providing working mothers with maternal leave; creating a labor relations board; establishing health and safety conditions; and providing insurance in case of industrial accidents.

Perhaps today's trend in our labor-management relations can best be gauged by the primary objectives in the labor policy adopted by the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company:

1. Expansion of the principle and practice of collective action between employers and employee representatives through collective bargaining.

2. Prompt settlement of all labor disputes by committees composed of representatives of workers and management.

3. Fostering workers' education for increased production, training and upgrading of employees, and improvement of health conditions.

4. Furnishing medical care and social service benefits in order to reduce absenteeism, and promotion of the welfare and morale of the workers.

5. Cooperating with other governmental agencies, in the development of an Island-wide code of employer-employee conduct.

WE TAKE POLITICAL ACTION

What Puerto Rico is doing today to solve its problems, and what she will be able to do in the future, will depend largely upon the democratic action of the Puerto Rican people themselves. The United States may help and it may hinder—it has both helped and hindered a great deal in the past. But in the long run, what a people does for itself is a hundredfold more effective than ever the best-intentioned and most enlightened paternalism. Believing as we do in this principle, we are convinced that the greatest favor that the United States could do us, would be to place us in such a position that American democracy would have a hundred-percent chance to function in Puerto Rico. Whether this might mean independence, statehood, or some other status, it would insure the United States a permanent place in our hearts, and it would allow us to prove to the Americas that United States democracy stands up well when transplanted to the tropics.

We have already gone a long way towards a political maturity of which any country in the world might well be proud.

Only a few years ago, our major political parties were largely lacking in meaning to the people. As some wag remarked, the Liberal Party wasn't liberal; the Socialist Party wasn't socialistic; the Republican Party didn't want a republic; and the Nationalist Party wasn't even a party.

But in 1940, all that changed. With the advent of the Popular Democratic Party, politics came to have a practical meaning for the man in the street and the man on the mountain trail.

Like all political parties, the Popular Democratic Party is composed of human beings of varying degrees of intelligence and integrity. Like all political parties, it has a philosophy and a program that are open to discussion. And like all political parties, it has sometimes fallen into error and sometimes been forced into compromise in the application of that philosophy and that program. But in spite of these obvious facts, the Popular Democratic Party is not just another political party.

The Populars began their campaign with the slogan of "Bread, Land, Liberty." A slogan may be just a slogan; but in this case, it was backed up with promises of specific legislation and the advice: "Give us just one chance; if we don't fulfill our promises, vote for somebody else next time."

Campaign speeches toned down traditional political oratory and empty rhetoric, concentrated on man-to-man discussions of everyday problems in straight-from-the-shoulder language. Even ethical problems were brought down from the realm of metaphysics to that of facts: "Don't sell your vote! Legislators represent the people who elect them. If you sell your vote to the sugar interests, then your legislators will be representing the sugar interests, not you. You can't afford to sell your right to govern yourselves for the next four years!" Some political speeches even ceased to be speeches at all in the literal sense of the world. The "orators" limited themselves to reading drafts of bills that the party promised to pass if voted into power.

In former elections, issues of political status—independence and statehood—had overshadowed economic and social issues; but no elections had ever produced either independence or statehood for the Island. The Popular Democratic Party, though most of its leaders were staunch independentists, ruled out the status issue from its platform: "A vote for the Popular Party does not mean a vote for any given political solution. We pledge our efforts to get rid of the present colonial status of the Island. When that time comes, the people themselves will decide what they want. In the meanwhile, our program is one of social justice."

Not many months after it had been established, the Popular Democratic Party astounded our most astute political observers by obtaining a working majority in the Insular Legislature, though it was not able to elect the Resident Commissioner to Washington.

Then came the struggle, largely successful, to put through the promised social legislation. At one critical moment, when the passage of an important bill was held up for lack of a single vote in the House, Don Luis Muñoz Marín, Popular leader, took the matter to the people. Night after night, over the radio, he repeated the refrain: "We need *one* vote; we need *one* man who

is willing to serve his country." Soon popular pressure produced that one man in the person of minority representative and the bill was ed. Similar difficulties marked the first four ye. f the quasi-triumph of the Popular Party. But during those years, the following legislation was passed: creation of the Land, Communications Transportation and Water Resources Authorities as well as the Development Bank, the Development Company, the Insular OPA and the Fire Service; establishment of 12-month salaries and basic wages for teachers; government treatment for venereal disease cases; basic allowance for destitute persons; rent control; the prohibition of racial discrimination; authorization for slum clearance by the Health Department; and a number of labor laws.

One of the most forward-looking measures taken by the Popular Democratic Party was the establishment of the Insular Planning Board. It adopts zoning regulations for urban areas; supplies municipalities with zoning maps; and makes master plans for such projects as airports, highways, municipal and Insular hospitals, rural resettlement, school expansion, health units, penal institutions, and police headquarters. It also makes fiscal studies in such varied fields as the rum export industry, the University of Puerto Rico, the Insular Lottery, and the reorganization of harbor and port activities under the Transportation Authority. One of the most important functions of the Planning Board is to prepare (and revise annually) a six-year economic program for the guidance of the Insular Legislature. This plan contains calculations of government income for the six years under consideration, calculations of principal and interest on government debts to be paid during the

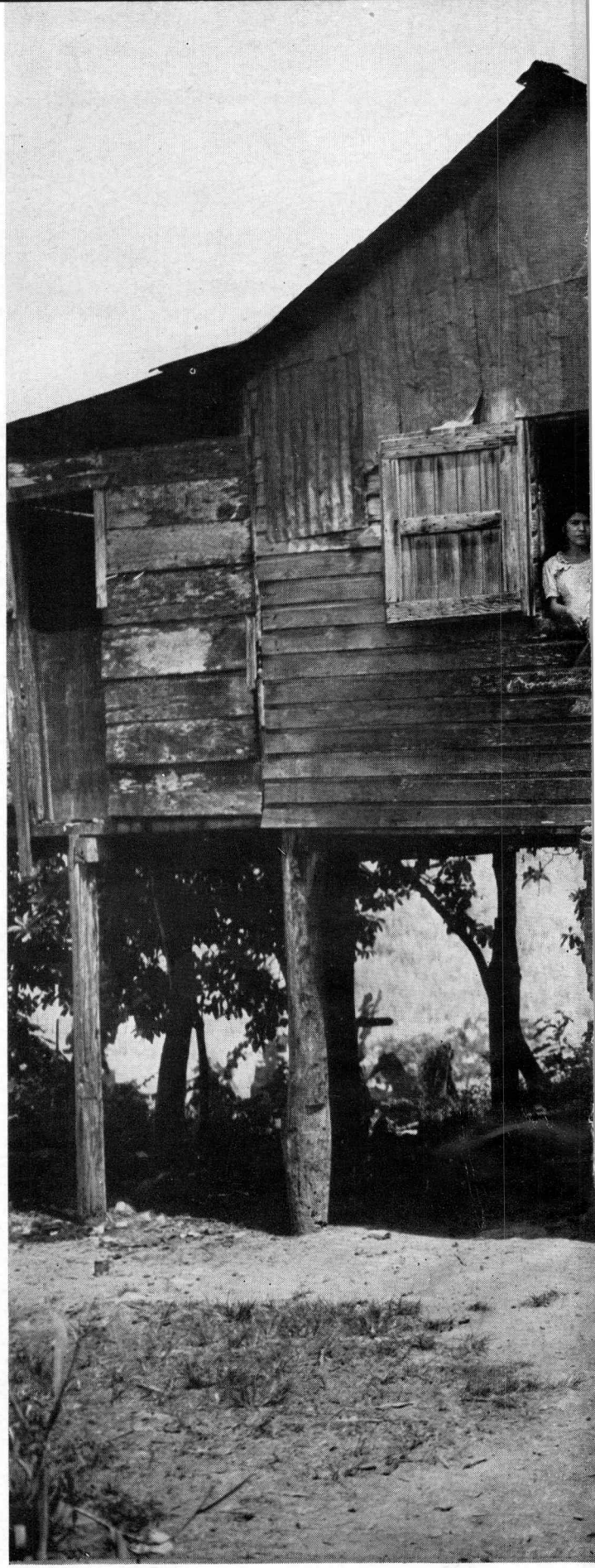
same period, and budget recommendations for government departments, authorities, and public works. This program is elaborated on the basis of recommendations from the governmental agencies themselves, public hearings, and statistical data. It may be modified by the Governor; and it serves as a valuable guide to our legislators, though it is in no wise binding upon them.

The performance of the party evidently satisfied the people; for the 1944 elections were a landslide. Of the seventy-seven municipalities, all but three of the smallest voted Popular. Of the Senatorial Districts, all voted Popular; and the same was true of the Representative Districts. Only two Senators-at-Large and two Representatives-at-Large remained of the older parties. Thus, the Popular Party, embarrassed by a premature partial victory in its first elections, was embarrassed by the lack of any effective minority opposition in its second.

But whatever may be the final judgment of history as to the practical accomplishments of the Popular Democratic Party, its advent marked a high point in the political maturity of Puerto Rico. When any people learns the practical value of its votes; when it learns to hold its elected representatives to their campaign promises; when it learns to distinguish between rhetorical tinsel and practical issues—then that people has come of age.

Further evidence of a disposition and ability to get together democratically to solve common problems has been given by the Puerto Rican people in their contributions to the War effort, in their magnificent stand against black-market profiteers, and in the unanimity of their appeal to Congress for a plebescite to end the colonial status of the Island.

Official recognition of the right and ability of Puerto Ricans to manage their own affairs is the recent appointment of Don Jesús T. Piñero as first native-born Governor of the Island. This move by Washington, which might be interpreted as a sop to forestall further demands, is regarded by Piñero himself and by the majority of his countrymen as merely one significant step in the extension of the democratic ideals of the United States to a people who believe in those ideals and are eager and able to make them a practical way of life.



TIERRA-LIBERTAD

ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHS

All of the photographs in this book were made between 1944 and 1946, the majority of them during what off-duty time I had as an Army photographer at Borinquen Field, an airbase near Aguadilla on the west end of the Island.

Two cameras were used—a standard 4″ x 5″ Speed Graphic with a 5″ Ektar lens occasionally supplemented by a 6⅜″ Kodak Anastigmat and an Automatic Rolleiflex. Both cameras were equipped for synchronized flash. High speed panchromatic films were used whenever they were available, and outdoor exposures were generally made according to meter readings with given film speeds cut in half.

Because of the brilliant and intense sunlight, flash bulbs or reflectors were sometimes used to fill in deep shadows. Films were developed as soon after exposure as possible as they deteriorate rapidly because of the humidity.

Medium yellow filters were employed on most of the outdoor pictures as I found that they gave ample correction of the intense blue of the tropical sky. I avoided using red and green filters to prevent the sky from going completely black. Development varied with whatever fine grain developers I could obtain during the war, with a preponderance towards over-exposure and under-development to reduce development time in developers that were hard to control from a temperature point of view. On two occasions films were rinsed in club soda because sufficient cool water was not available at the time.

The negatives of these pictures have been donated by the University of Puerto Rico to the documentary picture file of the Office of Information for Puerto Rico at La Fortaleza, San Juan. Copies are available to anyone at print cost.

CHARLES E. ROTKIN

PICTURE DATA

Page

7. Near Aibonito. Tobacco farms in the mountains.
8. Aguadilla. Young man.
   Near Toa Baja. Farm worker.
   San Sebastian. Rural woman.
   San Juan. Newspaperman.
9. San Juan. Young boy.
   Río Piedras. Young woman.
   Ponce. Child.
   Río Piedras. University professor.
10. San Juan. Section of Fort San Cristobal, old Spanish fort.
11. San Germán. Church of Porta Coeli, one of the oldest churches in the Western hemisphere.
12. San Juan. Street in the old section of city.
14. Aguadilla. Unloading bags of rice from Louisiana.
15. San Juan. Longshoremen on the waterfront waiting to unload a freighter.
16-17. Near Adjuntas. Farmer cultivating small farm on a steep hillside.
18. Near Aguada. Portrait of a farmer.
    Near Barranquitas. Farmer ploughing on a mountain slope.
19. Near Aguada. Rural family in doorway of their home.
20. Near Arecibo. Type of rural home called a *bohío.*
21. Near Morovis. Home of a planter.
22. Near Isabela. Rural house of unpainted wood with corrugated iron roof.
23. Near Vega Baja. Interior of a rural home.
24. Near Vega Baja. Farmer working in his subsistence garden.
25. Near Aguada. In the kitchen of a rural home.
26. Near Utuado. Little girls on road carrying water.
27. Near Luquillo. Women washing clothes in a stream.
28. Near Cayey. Tobacco barn on hillside cultivated with tobacco and sugar cane.
29. Near Vega Baja. Farmer working in a tobacco patch.
30. Near Aguadilla. Sugar worker.
31. Near Vega Baja. Cultivating a sugar field.
32. Near Isabela. *Guajanas,* sugar cane blossoms.
33. Near Mayagüez. Field of sugar in bloom.
34. Near Aguadilla. Cane cutters on their way to work in the early morning.
35. Near Aguadilla. Sugar worker cutting cane.
36. Near Aguadilla. Sugar workers harvesting cane field.
37. Near Aguadilla. Sugar workers leaving field at end of day's work.
38. Near San Sebastian. Rural bus.
39. Aguadilla. Unloading oranges from a truck.
    Near Vega Baja. Farmer on his horse.
    Near Aguadilla. Truck transporting sugar cane.
40. Near Vega Baja. Exterior of a one-room rural school.
    Near Morovis. School boy carrying an English textbook.
41. Near Vega Baja. Class in a one-room rural school.
42. Near Morovis. Second-unit school students working on school garden.
43. Vega Baja. Leader of the 4-H Club.
    Near Morovis. Carpentry class in second-unit school.
    Near Morovis. Native handicrafts class in second-unit school.
45. Near Aguadilla. Listening to the radio in a country store.
46. Near Río Piedras. Rural people at a *rosario cantado.*
47. Near Río Piedras. Rural people at a *rosario cantado.*
48. Near Aguada. Rural woman, with carved figures representing the Three Kings of religious tradition.
49. Bayamon. Good Friday processional in the plaza.
50-51. Barranquitas. View of the town.
52. Mayagüez. The plaza and City Hall.
53. San Juan. View of a section of the city.
54. San Juan. The *Banco Popular* building.
    San Juan. Street in the business district.
    San Juan. Residential suburban street.

55. San Juan. Street in old section of city.
56. Near Carolina. Construction workers.
57. Cataño. Industrial worker.
58. Aguadilla. Doctor and patient in an Insular Public Health Center.
59. San Juan. Electrical worker employed by the Insular Government.
San Juan. Government clerk.
Aguada. Insular police.
60. Utuado. Old-fashioned drugstore and its proprietor.
61. San Juan. Small *bazar*.
San Juan. Barber shop.
Aguadilla. Small cigar-making establishment.
62. Near Aguadilla. Fishermen on the beach.
63. Aguadilla. *Publico* driver soliciting passengers.
64. Aguadilla. Vendor of oranges.
65. Río Piedras. Vendor of soft drinks.
Moca. Vendor of native candy.
Aguadilla. Fish vendor.
Santurce. Vendor of household utensils.
66. Near Aguadilla. Women needleworkers in a small shop.
67. Morovis. Women working in a tobacco stemming plant.
68. Aguadilla. Women working at basket weaving.
San Juan. Switchboard operator.
69. Río Piedras. Cook serving food in home of Puerto Rican family.
70. Aguadilla. Shoe-shine boys.
71. San Juan. Newsboy on the street.
72-73. San Juan. Unemployed dock workers on the waterfront.
74. San Sebastian. Beggar at gate of church.
75. Isabela. House in the slum area.
76. San Juan. *La Perla,* slum district on the ocean front.
77. San Juan. *El Fanguito,* slum district in a ...al swamp.
...adilla. Houses along the beach.
78. San Juan. Residential street.
Vega Baja. Residential street.
79. San Juan. Street in old section of the city.
80. Santurce. Home of a wealthy family.
81. Near Aguadilla. Main flywheel of steam power plant at *Central* Coloso.
82. Near Aguadilla. Exterior of *Central* Coloso.
83. Near Aguadilla. Unloading sugar cane from trucks in *Central* Coloso.
84. Near Aguadilla. Grinding sugar cane in *Central* Coloso.
85. Near Aguadilla. Worker in *Central* Coloso.
Near Aguadilla. Workers operating centrifugals in *Central* Coloso.
86. Near Aguadilla. Filled bags of raw sugar ready for shipment to the United States.
87. San Juan. Trucks loaded with bags of sugar for export on the waterfront.
88. Arecibo. Worker operating automatic bottle-filling machine in the Ron Rico plant of the Puerto Rico Distilling Company.
Arecibo. Inspecting bottles of rum for impurities in the Ron Rico rum plant.
89. Arecibo. Capping and sealing bottles of rum in the Ron Rico rum plant.
91. Morovis. Grade school.
92-93. Vega Baja. The plaza.
94. Río Piedras. Youngsters watching the fireworks during a Patron Saint's Day festival.
Río Piedras. People playing games of chance during a Patron Saint's Day festival.
95. Santurce. Movie theater.
96. Vega Baja. Sandlot baseball game.
97. Near Luquillo. On Luquillo beach.
98. Near San Juan. Dancing in a casino on the outskirts of the city.
99. Near San Juan. Dance band playing in a casino.
100. Vega Baja. People leaving church after services on Sunday.
101. San Juan. In a small chapel during Easter week.
102. Isabela. Children preparing for the Three Kings Day holiday.
103. Sabana Seca. Wedding ceremony in a small chapel.
104. Near Carolina. Funeral.
105. San Juan. Presbyterian church.
107. Near Manati. Sign of the Land Authority in a re-settlement area for landless farm workers.

108. Near Toa Baja. Land Authority official describing parcels of land to be distributed free to landless farm workers.

109. Near Toa Baja. Farm worker drawing lots for a plot of land given free by the Land Authority.

Near Toa Baja. New home of farm worker built on plot of land given to him free by the Land Authority.

110. Near Arecibo. Speaker addressing workers of government-owned *Central* Cambalache at the distribution of proportional benefits.

111. Near Arecibo. Band playing at the distribution of proportional benefits for mill workers at *Central* Cambalache.

Near Arecibo. Sugar mill workers, participants in the payment of proportional benefits at *Central* Cambalache, receiving their share of the profits at the cashier's window.

Near Arecibo. Sugar mill worker who received the highest benefit payment at *Central* Cambalache.

112. Isabela. Rural housing project.

113. San Juan. The Falansterio Housing Project.

114. Aguadilla. In an Insular Public Health Center.

115. Vega Baja. Children eating school lunch provided by the Insular Government.

116. Near Utuado. In the power house of Dos Bocas Dam.

Near Utuado. Dos Bocas Dam and power house.

117. Near Morovis. In a rural home which has electricity.

118. Río Piedras. The University of Puerto Rico Administration Building and Tower.

120. Río Piedras. Class in the Natural Sciences Museum at the University of Puerto Rico.

121. Río Piedras. Pharmacy class at the University of Puerto Rico.

122. Río Piedras. Student at the University of Puerto Rico using a microscope.

123. San Juan. The School of Tropical Medicine.

124. Cataño. Storage silos of the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company Cement plant.

125. Cataño. In the pulp and paper mill of the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company.

126. Cataño. Kiln in the cement plant of the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company.

127. Cataño. Worker operating cement bag-filling machine in the cement plant of the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company.

128. Cataño. Machine for mixing ingredients of glass in the glass plant of the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company.

Cataño. Bottle-forming machine in the glass plant of the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company.

129. Cataño. Packing finished bottles in cartons in the glass plant of the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company.

130. Cataño. The pulp and paper mill of the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company.

131. Near Carolina. Constructing the clay products plant of the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company.

132. San Juan. Garage mechanic using high pressure lubrication equipment.

At an Army Air Base. Puerto Rican civilian air depot employee working on propeller of an Army combat airplane.

Near Aguadilla. Welder in a large sugar mill.

133. Near Río Piedras. Chemist in the yeast culture development laboratory of the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company.

134. Near Carolina. Construction workers.

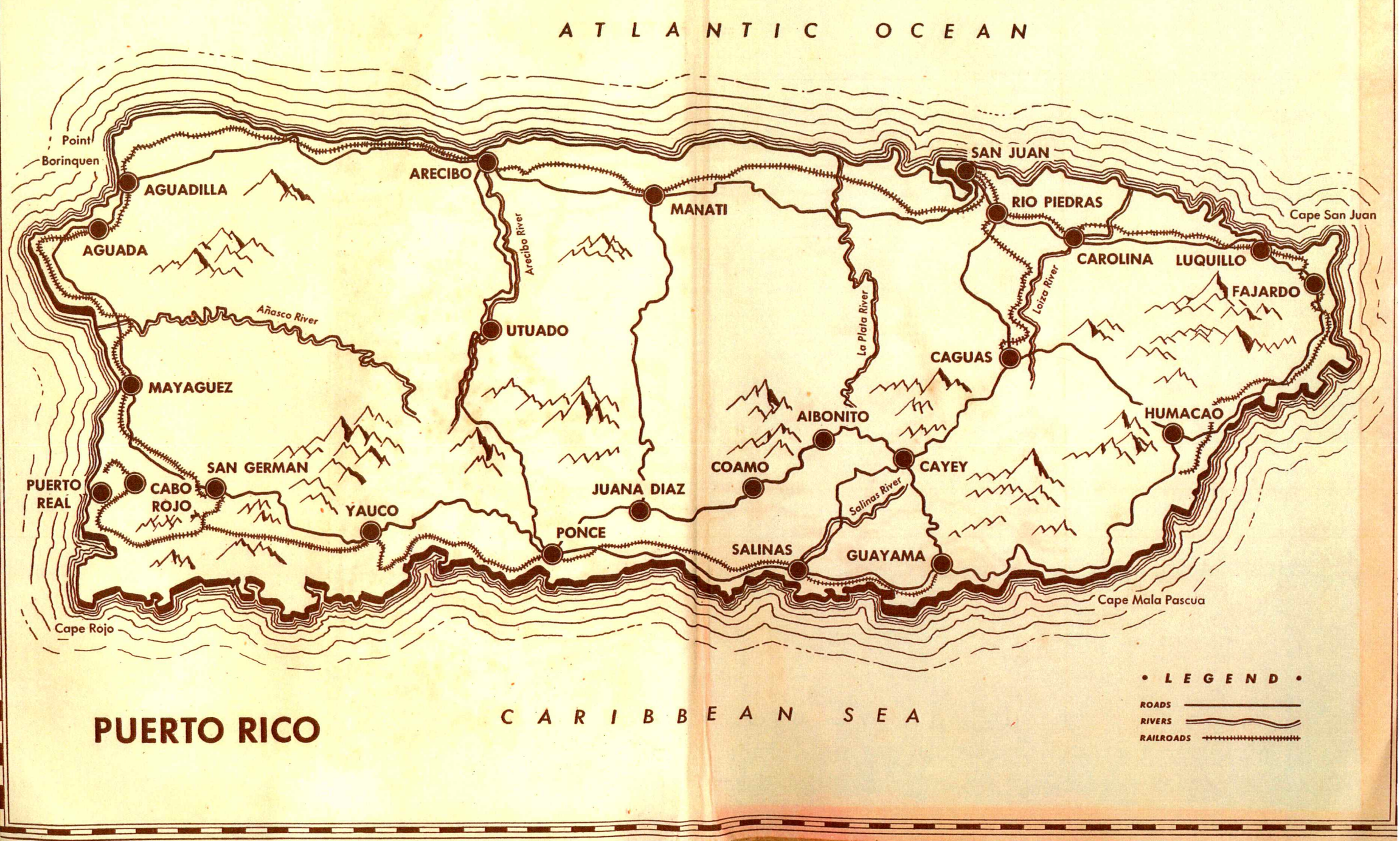
135. Cataño. Meeting of union representatives and management of the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company glass plant.

137. San Juan. The Capitol Building.

138-139. Near Vega Baja. Rural home displaying flag of the Popular Democratic Party with its slogan "Bread, Land, Liberty."

140. San Juan. Crowd at the inauguration ceremonies for Governor Jesús T. Piñero.

PRINTED BY
PROSPECT PRESS, INC.
NEW YORK, N.Y.


ATLANTIC OCEAN
Point Borinquen
AGUADILLA
AGUADA
ARECIBO
Arecibo River
MANATI
SAN JUAN
RIO PIEDRAS
Cape San Juan
CAROLINA
LUQUILLO
FAJARDO
Loiza River
La Plata River
Añasco River
UTUADO
CAGUAS
MAYAGUEZ
AIBONITO
HUMACAO
COAMO
CAYEY
SAN GERMAN
PUERTO REAL
CABO ROJO
JUANA DIAZ
Salinas River
YAUCO
PONCE
SALINAS
GUAYAMA
Cape Mala Pascua
Cape Rojo
CARIBBEAN SEA
PUERTO RICO
• LEGEND •
ROADS
RIVERS
RAILROADS

LEWIS C. RICHARDSON

Lewis C. Richardson, born in 1902, spent his boyhood in the country, towns, and cities of Massachusetts and Connecticut. He entered Connecticut Agricultural College to study poultry farming, but soon became a convert of the English Department. Upon graduation he decided to see the world on a shoestring, applied for teaching jobs in all the United States territories and possessions, and accepted the first offer, which came from Puerto Rico.

In 1924, Richardson began teaching high school English in Utuado, near the center of the Island. Two years later he went to the eastern-coast town of Yabucoa as superintendent of schools, and there he married Angelita Sepúlveda Moctezuma, one of his teachers. They now have a daughter about to graduate from high school.

Richardson went to Río Piedras in 1928 to teach in the University of Puerto Rico. He has remained there ever since, except for occasional visits to the States. On one of these he studied for his master's degree at Columbia University. During another—an enforced four-year absence brought about by over-enthusiasm on the then wrong side of the local political fence—Richardson studied and taught at the Johns Hopkins University and acted as assistant editor of the Maryland State Guidebook.

The first leg of the trip around the world, however, seems also to have been the last. Richardson has decided that Puerto Rico is home. He is now directing the English Institute, which is investigating ways and means of improving English instruction in Puerto Rico. He is a member of the Committee on English as a Second Language, of the National Council of Teachers of English. And he is active in the Puerto Rico Teachers' Association.

PUERTO RICO

CARIBBEAN CROSSROADS

CHARLES E. ROTKIN, who made all of the photographs in this book, first came to Puerto Rico aboard a troop transport in January 1944. Assigned by the Army as an aerial photographer, he was much more impressed with Puerto Rico and the Puerto Ricans at ground level than he was from ten thousand feet in the air.

Accordingly he began to turn his personal cameras towards the people who live in the towns and cities and on the mountain and coastal farms. The pictures he made soon gave him the idea of this book, but execution was difficult because of his being an enlisted man in the Army. The University of Puerto Rico became interested in the project primarily because of the wealth of misinformation that had recently been finding its way to the States and because such a book would mean that the Island would be pictured from a fresh and unbiased point of view. United States born Professor Lewis C. Richardson, head of the English Institute and a resident of Puerto Rico for the past twenty-three years, was chosen to write the story of Puerto Rico for his fellow Continental Americans. And Jose M. Toro-Nazario, twice winner of insular awards for outstanding journalism, was made advisor on the facts and implications that formed the background of the text.

The main desire of the University was to make this collaboration possible. The institution felt that the authors should be given a free hand, and it accordingly exercised no control over either the photography or the writing. It did, however, assist liberally by helping to supply necessary materials, transportation, and other facilities; and, most important of all, became an effective liaison between the campus and the people of the island through its Agricultural Extension Service. In making possible the production of this book, the University hopes that many misconceptions about this relatively little-known section of America will be cleared up.

PUERTO RICO · CARIBBEAN CROSSROADS